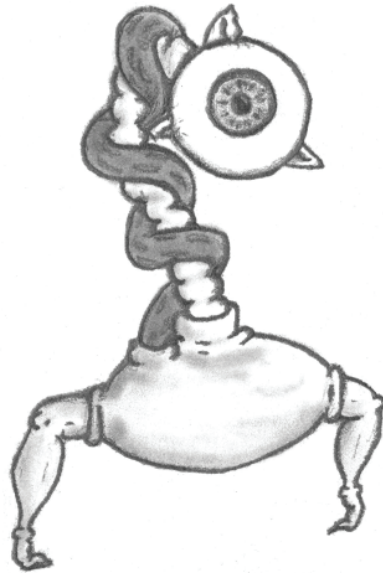


# THE MAGAZINE OF BIZARRO FICTION

## Issue #1



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# A Rant from the Editor

So here we are. The first issue of *The Magazine of Bizarro Fiction*. The beginning of what will be a long and thrilling journey through the world of bizarro fiction.

The aim of this magazine is to provide you with the very best in new and rare bizarro fiction.

In addition, we will be trying to push the bizarro movement forward and making it more aware of itself. We hope to do this with interviews, nonfiction, and reviews that will increase your understanding of what this is all about.

Bizarro is not just a fiction genre but a writing community. The relationships between the authors involved extends much further than just sharing many of the same publishers.

There is BizarroCon, DIY book tours, house parties/readings, champagne jams, and much more. Within these pages you'll find accounts of some of the events and advice on how you too can become involved.

Bizarro is not an exclusive club. Go to [www.BizarroCentral.com](http://www.BizarroCentral.com) to find out about upcoming events. Register for the message board. It's a great way to develop relationships with many of the authors you'll find here.

Now, before we go any further let's address the six-hundred pound badger in the room:

*"What is bizarro?"*

Maybe this is your first introduction to the bizarro genre or maybe you're already a diehard fan and just want to know where I stand on the question.

When one reads horror they want to be scared. When one reads romance they want that feeling of romance.

Bizarro is the weird. Bizarro is the literary equivalent to the cult section of your video store.

When one reads bizarro it is to have their mind taken to the same terrains previously dominated by people such as David Lynch, John Waters, Alejandro Jodorowsky, David Cronenberg, and Lloyd Kaufman.

I also believe that bizarro is the spiritual successor to the heyday of pulp fiction, time when all genre fiction was called "fantastic" fiction and H. P. Lovecraft was proudly a "writer of the weird."

Face it, modern science-fiction, fantasy, horror, western, romance, and any other form of genre fiction you want to name have become, with a few notable exceptions, formulaic and boring. It has gotten to the point that one can predict a novel's entire plotline after having read only the first few pages.

Bizarro brings back the sense of adventure and magic that has been missing from genre fiction for decades. It is an alternative to archetypes that were developed decades ago and have developed little since.

These are authors proudly waving their freak flag. They are not afraid to explore any dank, psychedelic, squishy corner of the imagination.

Thank you so much for reading. I sincerely hope you enjoy this strange journey through, in my opinion, the most exciting movement in current literature.

Please send questions, comments, insults, flattery, baseless accusations, and PayPal bribes to [bizarromagazine@gmail.com](mailto:bizarromagazine@gmail.com).

- Jeff Burk

*Bruce Taylor, aka Mr Magic Realism, has been in the writing game longer than most people reading this have been alive. His dreamlike stories of everyday horrors filtered through his weird vision of the world are like nothing else out there.*

*He is a wonderfully joyous man filled with happiness and wonder, and a staple of the West Coast convention scene, make sure to say "hi" if you ever get the chance to meet him. Just be careful if you drink with him. He will drink you under the table, as this editor learned late one night at OryCon '08.*

## **Justice in Amerry-Ka** *by Bruce Taylor*

**You** see the giant spiders sitting at the bench. One is black. The other white. They play a game of chess. You've got really fine vision and you see that all the pieces on the board are – *you*. The spiders are dressed in judicial robes; the black one wears a white robe, the white one wears a black one. You have this intense sense of foreboding. Somehow this does not look good. Your lawyer stands beside you. He has eyes all over his body. You wonder how a lawyer could have so many eyes. "Comes with the profession," he once hissed. Your lawyer doesn't miss a thing. Not a fucking thing.

"Check," says the black spider in the white robes. "Your king is in check."

"I noticed," says the other spider.

"No matter what you do –"

"I know," says the spider dressed in black. "No matter what I do –"

"You move into check."

The white spider then turns to you. "Now, how do you plead?"

You don't know what to say.

"Say something," your lawyer says.

"What?"

"*Something!*"

"Something," you say.

"Guilty as charged," replies the spider in white.

Your lawyer rises in your defense. "But," he turns to you, "before I defend you any further, your case has already cost \$78,000."

Internally, you crash. "But – but – but –" you whimper, "I thought we'd discuss cost after the case – you said so – \$78,000 is a lot to defend me –"

"You got it wrong – I changed my mind. I decided not to wait. And –" he smiles, "it's \$78,000 – *so far*."

"But – but – but you've only defended me for five minutes."

"Picky, picky, picky. Legal stuff is costly. Can you afford me or not?"

You don't know what to say. Mentally, you tally your assets: clothing: \$50.00, wages: \$100 dollars a day. House: 70% depreciation from the last, Corporate Managed Economic Adjustment – from \$50,000 yesterday to now being worth only \$5,000 today. You realize that, as far as affording this, you're fucked.

"There's no way I can afford this," you whisper.

"Tsk," says the lawyer. He ups and leaves. But of course, he leaves his bill: \$79,000 – while you were fretting, the cost went up \$1,000.00. You look at the bottom of the bill: in faded letters, it reads: "Your Patronage Is Appreciated."

The giant white spider in black robes leaps upon a large, unsuspecting fly and as it wraps the fly in silk, it says to you, “Does the witness wish to respond to the accusations before him?”

Somewhere, you regain enough strength to say, “I – I’d like to know the charges against me –”

“You should know them,” says the spider in black, somehow focusing all his eight eyes on you.

“Maybe I should. But I don’t.”

The black spider in white robes sighs, or maybe it hisses. It’s hard to say which. “Which of the *many* charges do you wish to hear?” It goes back to sucking the juices from the fly.

“All of them.”

“Take too long,” says the black-robed spider judge. “How about the best ones? I’ve got some outstanding ones that I’ve highlighted in yellow Dayglo-marker.”

“That’d be fine.”

“You were born.”

You gulp. “But I can’t help that.”

“Guilty of Original Sin. Born Bad. Guilty as charged.”

“M – may I hear the other charges?”

“Petting a cat the wrong way. The cat alleged willful misconduct and abuse –”

“But – but – but she was *purring!*”

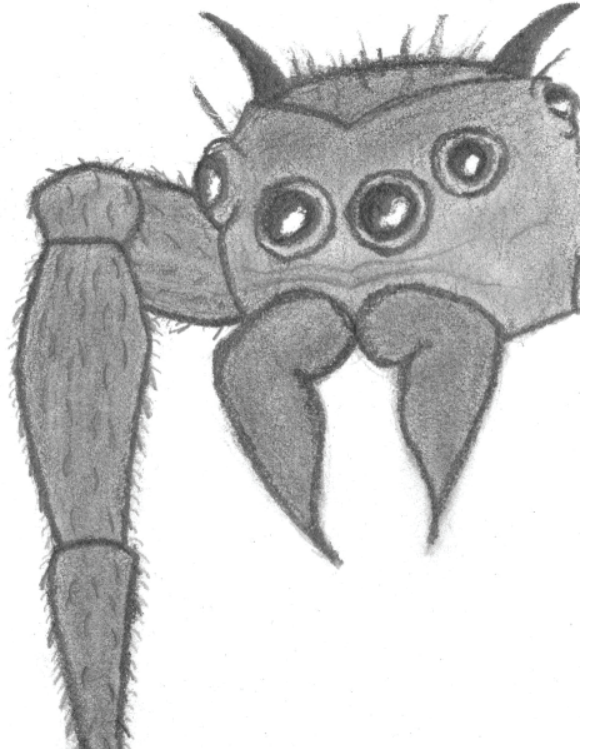
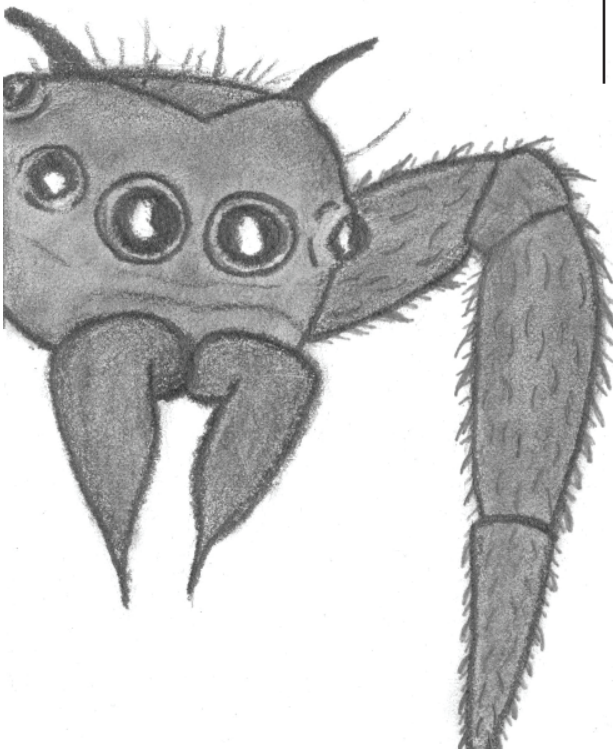
“Just because she was purring doesn’t mean she likes abuse. Guilty as charged.”

You look up beseechingly to the judges. “What are my other crimes?”

“Being hit by an ambulance while in a cross walk.”

“But – but – but –” you say, “*They hit me while I was in a crosswalk –*”

“No excuse. Police personnel, fire department employees, Paramedics, city, county and state officers and workers, any official working for the Public Good and Order, building inspectors, pest control and all their agents, judges, accountants, corporate



heads and trustees and members of the board thereof cannot be sued. You were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Guilty as charged.”

You look up wonderingly. “Who *can* be sued?”

“Anyone else. Especially if you’re poor, mentally ill, have no health insurance, don’t speak English, are a woman or a minority.”

“That’s an awful lot of people,” you say.

“So?” says the judge in black.

“Mercy?” you try.

“Hahahahahahaha,” laugh the judges. “Guilty as charged.”

The black-robed spider flings the carcass of the sucked-out fly at you and it lands with a moist *squarsh* on the table right in front of you. You sit there speechless. Then, as you dumbly wipe off fly guts, you realize you are indeed, fucked. Fucked big time. Fucked without end. Fucked like you never dreamed you could be fucked. Fucked without rhyme, without reason. Fucked without meaning to be fucked. Fucked beyond all comprehension. Fucked beyond your worst nightmare. Fucked like you’ve never believed it was possible to *be* fucked.

The white-robed judge snickers. “Wanna hear your sentence?”

You feel like your guts are caving in.

“Torture,” says the judge. He takes a ball of silk and throws it at you; it hits you in the face and you are smothered. “Torture,” says the judge, “I’ve always loved torture.”

You wonder how this can possibly be justice.

“I bet you’re wondering how this can

possibly be justice,” says the justice in white robes. “I’ll tell you how it’s justice. It makes me feel good to squash people like you who have no socially redeeming value by my standards. Your little miserable lives deserve to be snuffed out. That’s the way it is. Some die, some win. Social Darwinism. Survival of the richest. Money equals power equals control. No money? No power. No power? No control. It’s your fault. Wanna hear your punishment?”

You stand as if naked in the winds of the capricious order of things; standing before an existential firing squad who just sees this as another day, another pay check and who could give a rat’s ass about you. You’re just target practice and that’s *all* you are.

“Slow torture,” says the spider judge, dressed in black, “by being dragged through hot coals, busted glass and then through a colony of fire ants.”

“Then,” says the judge in white robes, drooling, “we do it again. And again. And *again*. You will be given transplants and new skin to keep you alive for *ever*.”

*Oh, God, you think, oh, God, this guy has read the Greeks - who was it that kept regrowing his liver again only to have it torn out by a vulture every night?*

Abruptly, your slimy lawyer friend is there beside you. “Well, looks like we lost. So it goes. Don’t forget to pay your bill.” Then, “Cheer up, it could be worse. You could be dead.”

He slaps a bill down beside you for his services then scuttles off to God knows where. You don’t even want to look at the bill but something at the bottom does catch your eye. A sentence in faded letters reads, “Your patronage is appreciated.”

# Four Scenes by Jeremy Kemp



*Andersen Prunty is one of the rising stars of the bizarro scene. With three books out on Eraserhead Press (The Overwhelming Urge, Zerostrata, and Jack and Mr. Grin) and two on Cargo Cult Press (Market Adjustment and The Sorrow King) it is unlikely that his upward trajectory will be slowing down anytime soon.*

*He sold this story based on the pitch line, "It's like Scooby Doo, but Scooby and the gang are traveling pornographers." Hell yeah. We all knew there was something up with Velma and Daphne.*

## **The Sex Beast of Scurvy Island** *by Andersen Prunty*

**A**t the sound of the doorbell, Brock Rockhard stopped in mid-thrust. The girl below him, the one they currently called Project 26, opened her eyes wide and stifled a moan.

"It's okay," Carrie Godown called from the next room. "It's just Sheriff Dent."

Brock continued thrusting.

Project 26's moans continued.

The camera ran.

**Carrie** opened the front door. "Sheriff Dent."

The plump officer stared over her shoulder, trying to find the source of the ecstatic moaning.

"You caught us in the middle of filming."

"I could come back."

"You're welcome to watch." Carrie knew Dent was only into gay animal porn but felt like she should offer anyway.

"I think I'll pass this time."

"What brings you by?"

"I have a favor to ask."

"Come on in."

Carrie retreated across the living room

of the old farmhouse to the doorway of the back bedroom, pausing momentarily to look at the rippling muscles of Brock's deeply tanned back and the scabby knees of Project 26. Zeke Loner stood in the corner of the room, recording everything.

"Make sure you get the angles right," she told him. "Most guys don't want to stare at Brock's ass for ten minutes."

He flipped her off. She slammed the door.

She turned back around to see Dent staring at Frump, the dog with perfectly formed male human genitalia, lying on his back and sleeping. Dent's eyes glazed over. He absently rubbed himself through his uniform pants.

"Sheriff?"

He blinked and shook his head. "I think I zoned out. Where was I?"

"You had a favor to ask."

Carrie sat down on the couch in the middle of the room, shoving the napping Emma Inside over. Emma opened her eyes and stretched. Carrie told her to go make some coffee.

Carrie stared at Dent's blooming erection. "Sit?"



“Maybe I should.”

Sadly, she knew the cause of Dent’s erection was the poor sleeping dog and not her perfect figure, experimental black hair, and multitudinous piercings.

Dent sat down and stared dreamily into space.

“Your favor?”

“Oh, right.” He took his hat off and placed it over his crotch. “I’ve got this old friend who’s a sheriff down at a place called Scurvy Island.”

“I’ve heard of it.”

“You have?”

“Yes. I hear they have some wonderful... local sights.”

“And that’s the problem, I’m afraid.”

“The local sights?”

“All those delicious girls and boys. It seems like most of the young women are pregnant and the young men are getting killed in ridiculous ways.”

“Ridiculous how?”

“They had to dig one of them out of a cow’s stomach.”

“Oh. Did the cow swallow him?”

“They believe he was inserted into the cow’s rectum. The Sheriff—his name’s Denny Rogers—is pretty baffled. As you know, that’s a tourist area and most of the tourists come for the services of the young men and women. A lot of people have stopped coming. Sure, they’ve had their share of fetishists, and the women and remaining men are still willing to work, but soon Scurvy Island as we know it is just going to dry up.”

Frump roused himself from the floor and trotted toward the sound of Dent’s voice.

“And you want us to...”

Dent held out his hand and rubbed Frump’s head.

“Find out who’s doing all the raping and killing and put a stop to it.” He scratched vigorously below Frump’s chin. “Yeah, that’s a good boy.”

Carrie looked on in disgust. “Why doesn’t the Sheriff do that?”

“To be honest, he’s not very smart. And he might be a little corrupt. I think the Grassville Gang can do better. We’ll make it up to you financially, of course. And you’ll have free room and board while you’re down there.”

Frump latched onto Dent’s leg and began thrusting against it.

“If it’s okay with the others, then we’ll do it.”

Carrie stood up. She could tell she had already lost Dent. His eyes were rolled back in his head as Frump continued to thrust and pant against his leg.

“I’ll leave you two alone.” She stood up and walked toward the kitchen to check on Emma. As she reached the door, she heard Dent cry out in ecstasy.

“That’s twenty dollars,” she called over her shoulder.

“On the table,” he called back before shutting the door on his way out.

**Carrie** leaned against the counter. “What a dirty pig.”

Emma poured her a cup of coffee. “Dent?”

“Yeah.”

“He’s all right. Just different.”

“So what do you think about going to Scurvy Island?”

Emma let out a resigned sigh. She’d just come off a three day Guzzle bender and felt deflated.

“Not to film. To work.”

Emma looked down at the floor, her blond hair falling over her shoulders.

"I do like to solve crime," she said. "Almost as much as I like to fuck."

"I'll go tell the boys."

"Are we bringing...?"

"Project 26?"

"We're going to have to give her a name eventually."

"When it's time. Maybe we'll just leave her here to keep an eye on Frump."

"You think that's a good idea?"

"It's either here or back to the truck stop glory hole."

**Before** traveling, the Grassville Gang liked to drink copious amounts of Guzzle Blue to keep them alert.

Together, they charged out of the house shouting, "Grassville Gang to the rescue! Grassville Gang forever!"

Brock Rockhard with his red bandana, sunglasses, cut-off denim shorts, and nothing else save his flip-flops and grossly unhealthy tan.

Carrie Godown with her black dreadlocks and piercings, black tank top, black gypsy skirt, black-framed glasses, and black combat boots.

Zeke Loner with his messy hair, dark brown sweater, khaki corduroys, and whatever his book of the day was.

And Emma Inside, the once reluctant virgin, now sex-starved and ready for action with her long straight blond hair, form hugging white t-shirt, and skintight jeans worn low around the waist.

Together, they charged for the deep purple van. The driver's side of the van featured an airbrushed depiction of two kids in wheelchairs playing badminton.

The girls slid open the side door and hopped in.

The boys jumped in front.

Brock turned the key in the ignition.

Loud music blared.

Brock turned to shout at everyone in his dumb guy party voice: "It's a good thing this baby can flyyyy!"

And he hit the accelerator, taxiing onto the runway cut through the middle of a cornfield and, as the van went faster and faster, as they were almost out of runway, Brock flashed a thumbs up to Zeke, who opened the glove compartment and pulled the super special lever. The van lifted and took to the skies.

Excited, as they always were before a job, and hopped up on Guzzle, the girls disrobed and began going at each other.

Emma feverishly and continuously moaned, "Ow, my pussy's sore."

Brock watched them in the rearview mirror, pulling his cock out and massaging himself. Carrie was covered in tattoos of the ugliest people she had ever seen. She added new ones all the time. Brock found their hideous faces, made even more hideous through Carrie's contortions, quite erotic.

Zeke opened up Camus' *The Stranger* and began to read.

They reached Scurvy Island in no time at all.

**Zeke** wasn't sure why Brock always flew the van. Maybe he'd been a pilot at one point but, whatever shred of intelligence he'd once had had long since been obliterated by copious amounts of varied Guzzle products.

They circled the island until they found what could have been a runway.

"Landing!" Brock took his hand off his penis to guide the wheel.

They came down rough, in an explosion of vaginal juices, lubricant, sweat, come, and curses.

The girls threw open the sliding door and exited the van, pulling on clothes and adjusting them, buttoning buttons.

Zeke got out and calmly slid his old paperback into his pocket.

Brock got out, slammed the door violently, and sniffed the air for blood or vagina.

The front driver's side wheel was bent under the frame.

"You trashed it," Carrie said.

"I'll fix it!" Brock shouted. He slammed his head into the quarter panel above the tire and rocked the van over on two wheels. Grabbing the tire, he gave it a yank. It came off in his hands. Brock was extreme. In fact, two years ago, he'd changed his name to Brock X-treme. Zeke wasn't sure what kind of Guzzle he'd been on at the time but it didn't last long and ended with Brock going to jail, followed by rehab.

"Now you really trashed it," Carrie said.

Brock hurled the tire. It came down a few feet away and rolled a while before coming to rest in the sand. Then he collapsed next to the van, pulled his knees into his chest and started breathing heavily.

"It's okay," Emma said. "Just calm down. I'm sure somebody here can fix it."

"I think that's the Sheriff." Zeke pointed across the hood of the van.

A deeply tanned man with shoulder length gray hair and a well-clipped beard approached them. He looked a lot like Kenny Rogers before the botched plastic surgery. He wore long khaki cargo shorts, ratty white Converse, and a stained white wife beater with SHERIFF written across the ample stomach in black marker.

"Denny Rogers?" Carrie stuck out her hand. She hoped the Sheriff wouldn't notice it smelling like vagina.

"The one and only."

"We hear you have a problem," Carrie said.

"That I do. You here to help me out?"

"Well, we're always up for a good mystery. We like solving crime. Almost as much as we like to fuck."

Rogers looked momentarily perplexed. "I think there's been too much fucking 'round here, if you ask me."

"Tell us all about it."

"Tell you. Hell, I can show you."

**They** hopped into the Sheriff's car, a rusted out hulk that would fit about a hundred people, and drove to a barn toward the middle of the island. They didn't pass a single car. Didn't see a single person out walking. The entire island felt abandoned.

Standing in front of the barn doors, Rogers said, "I wasn't really sure what to do with them so I just put 'em in here."

He swung open the doors and entered the barn. The Grassville Gang followed him in.

There must have been a hundred or more stalls. A pregnant woman was in each one. They were all naked, holding their huge stomachs and looking sadly at the Gang, as though they had come to free them.

"I'm runnin out of room," Rogers said. "And the tourists are runnin out of entertainment. Therefore, I'm runnin out of tourists and runnin out of money."

"Why are they in stalls?" Carrie asked. "It doesn't seem right to just lock them up like that."

"I have to go," Zeke said. He had his book out, holding it in front of his crotch.

Carrie wondered if he was appalled by the conditions or really needed to read. He couldn't have been aroused.

"I think we've all seen enough," Carrie said.

Brock had moved up to one of the stalls and begun massaging a woman's breasts.

"Mmm," the woman moaned. "I'm lactating too... You want summa that? Huh? You want summa momma's milk?"

Brock took a step back and the woman began shooting milk through the air.

"Sick!" Brock shouted and ran out of the barn in fear. Everyone else followed.

**They** hopped back into Rogers' cruiser and drove through the quaint island town until they reached a pizza shop. Once inside the pizza shop, they were the only ones there besides the young island boy behind the counter.

They slid into a booth and Brock barked, "Five large pies!"

"Sir," the island boy said quietly. "You're going to have to put on a shirt."

"It's okay," Rogers said. "He's with me."

"But the health code..."

"I have one hundred and twenty-six pregnant women locked in a barn. Fuck the goddamn health code."

"Whatever..." The boy retreated back behind the counter.

"Can we get some beer?" Rogers asked.

"A keg!" Brock shouted.

The boy wheeled out a keg and sat five plastic mugs on the table before struggling to hoist the keg up. The boy filled the glasses. Beer was actually, technically, now Guzzle Gold, but most people still just called it beer. The boy disappeared again.

Rogers took a long sip of his beer and shook his head. "I know you guys probably think it's inhumane to keep all them girls locked up like that but I have reason to believe that... when they deliver the babies, they might be dangerous."

"How do you figure?" Emma asked.

"I personally examined each one of them."

"You mean like their pussies?" Brock said. He held his left hand into a circle and punched his right index finger in and out of the hole.

"Yes." Rogers looked embarrassed. "That's exactly what I mean."

Brock nodded his head up and down knowingly and made a raunchy face.

"Now hold up. I didn't fuck any of them. I just examined them. Anyway, they each demonstrated similar signs."

"Similar signs?" Carrie asked.

"The person who impregnated them had a very large penis."

Carrie wondered if it was larger than Zeke's.

"Have you come to any conclusions?"

"I think the same person impregnated all of them over a three day period. Of course, that's been months ago. I wasn't even aware of the problem until recently and I'm afraid it might be too late."

"It's not too late," Carrie said. "We'll find him. Whatever it takes."

The island boy came back and covered the table in pizzas. Everyone was ravenous and busied themselves eating. By the time they were finished, Rogers and Brock were both too drunk to carry on a conversation. Carrie, Emma, and Zeke helped them out to the car and Zeke drove to the Labrador Hotel. They left Rogers in the car and went into the hotel to confer.

**The** Grassville Gang did their best thinking while shooting porn.

Once inside their hideously dilapidated room, they flopped Brock onto the bed. Emma turned on the docked iPod and tuned it to some mood music. The mood music was one long repetitive piece Zeke's friend recorded using his keyboard under the moniker Your Mom's Face. Carrie opened up the cooler and passed around bottles of Guzzle Pink. Zeke stood behind the camera.

Carrie unbuttoned Brock's denim shorts and pulled them down his legs. Everyone in the Grassville Gang was natural except for Brock who was a mess of chemical tanning, electrolysis, implants, steroids, and numerous penis modifications. No one was sure where the penile parts came from but it was so racially diverse it was the genital equivalent of a college brochure.

Carrie began sucking his scarred, multi-colored member and Emma forced some Guzzle into his mouth.

"Wait," Zeke said. "What do we call this one? We can't just start shooting without a title."

"Hmm?" Carrie mumbled around Brock's penis.

"A title?"

"Oh." Carrie came up and held Brock in her hand. "Why don't we just call it Out of Their Heads (And Clothes) Part 12?"

"Sounds good."

"Thanks." Carrie went back to sucking Brock.

Emma stood up, downed her Guzzle, and slowly took off her clothes while making eye contact with the camera. She finished off the Guzzle and tossed the bottle into the corner where it shattered.

"Mmm, I'm so wasted," she said into the camera. "And my pussy's sore."

She stumbled getting up onto the bed and straddled Brock's face. He was out of it but still knew enough to perform his duties. His tongue began lapping at Emma's pink vagina.

"Ow, my pussy's so sore."

Carrie stopped fellating Brock and began removing her clothes. The more flesh she revealed, the more disgusting tattoos Zeke had to focus on. Her latest addition, just above her left breast, looked like a man who had a horn growing out of his cheek. She left her glasses on.

"You like this one?" She stroked the new ugly man. "I want that horn up my wet cunt."

She slipped off her white underwear and flicked her clitoral ring. She downed the rest of her Guzzle in one gulp. She staggered and took a step backward. Zeke zoomed in on her unfocused eyes.

"Fuck," she said. "I wanna fuck till I puke. Yeah? Does that sound good? You wanna make me puke?"

Then she was on the bed, straddling Brock's wildly erect cock. "Oh, yeah," she said. "Bury that shit in me. Oh fuck. I'm gonna rip off my nipples."

She tugged vigorously at her nipples.

Zeke set the camera up on the tripod and checked to make sure it was focused on the bed.

"Ow, my pussy's sore," Emma cried.

Zeke took his clothes off behind the camera. He was thin, pale, and hairy. His penis hung down to his knees.

"You gonna gag me with that thing?" Carrie said. "Huh? You gonna slide that monkey arm down my throat till I puke? Puke and come?"

“Yes,” Zeke spoke in an enunciated monotone. “Whatever. Life is meaningless. Might as well fuck until we die.”

He approached the bed. While riding Brock hard, Carrie grabbed Zeke’s cock and slowly took it all into her mouth, down her throat.

“Ow, my pussy’s sore.”

The bass from the stereo had kicked in and the Grassville Gang was lost in the haze of Guzzle and sex.

Carrie gagged and pulled away from Zeke’s monster cock. “Aw, fuck, baby. You gonna shoot your jibbles on my teeth?”

“No.” Zeke sounded bored. “I just want to (sigh) stick this big cock in your tight hole.”

“Get your jibbles off? Aw, fuck! I wish you could fuck my spine. Oh, baby, yeah. I’m gonna roll on the floor.”

Carrie pulled herself off Brock and began rolling on the floor. She rolled until she hit the wall and then rolled back until she hit the bed. Zeke went to the head of the bed and bent Emma over Brock. She eagerly started sucking Brock, proffering her ass to Zeke. “Careful,” she said. “My pussy’s sore.”

“The pain will make you feel more alive.”

Zeke slapped her ass hard and mechanically.

“Hurdle!” Carrie stood up from the floor and took a running leap over the flesh heap on the bed. She flew into a table and broke it. Covered in blood and splinters, she stumbled over to the bed and started smacking Emma in the face as Emma sucked Brock, Zeke pounding her from behind.

“Stick your fingers in that asshole!” Carrie shouted savagely.

Zeke obeyed, plugging Emma’s ass

with his middle finger.

Things became even hazier after that. The foursome ran through every combination possible until they reached their grand finale.

“Matter spatter!” Carrie shouted.

“God. Pussy’s so fucking sore...” Emma hissed through gritted teeth.

Carrie laid down on her back. Zeke and Emma rolled Brock on top of her. Emma fed his cock into Carrie’s vagina. Carrie shouted, “Shitstorm fiasco!” Emma sandwiched her hips between Brock and Carrie’s heads so Carrie was lapping at her cunt and Brock was tonguing her asshole.

Zeke lubed up his penis and worked it into Brock’s filthy rectum. This was a special scene. They could only do this when Brock was really, really wasted. Zeke worked away for a few minutes and Carrie shouted, “Matter spatter!” again.

Zeke pulled out, kneeled beside Brock and began slapping his back with his feces-covered cock.

Emma crawled up to the head of the bed, splayed her legs, and put a bag of ice on her vagina before sticking her thumb in her mouth, looking into the camera, and crying.

“Get your jibbles out!” Carrie yelled. “Get em all in that shit!”

“Yes. I’m getting ready to come in this shit. This shit I got from fucking another man in the ass.”

“Oh God. Oh fuck! I’m gonna fucking puke. Puke and bleed and pass out!”

Just as Zeke was ready to come, the power went out.

“What?” he said.

He heard things moving around. Brock wasn’t under him anymore.

Carrie kept shouting, “What the fuck is going on!”

“Ow, my pussy’s sore? Even though I have ice on it?” Emma called. Zeke wasn’t sure where she was.

Then he heard a shrill voice coming from somewhere near the window.

“Ha ha! You may be almost as good at solving crime as you are at fucking, Grassville Gang, but you’ll never catch The Impregnator!”

And then the window shattered and all the power came back on.

“Zeke?” Carrie called from the bathroom. “You’d better come here.”

Zeke walked into the bathroom, his bare feet crunching across the debris.

“I’m going to be sick,” Carrie said.

The bathroom was covered in shit, blood, and entrails. Brock lay in a pool of gore in the bathtub. Carrie vomited into the toilet.

Emma came into the bathroom and said, “I think that guy raped me. My pussy’s sore, like, for real this time.”

“Okay,” Zeke said. “We need to call Sheriff Rogers.”

“I gotta get out of this bathroom.” Emma turned back into the main room.

“And we should probably all put some clothes on,” Zeke said.

He grabbed his clothes from the floor and put them on. He grabbed his cell phone from his pants pocket and called Rogers. It rang and rang.

“He’s not answering.”

“Did you call 911?” Carrie was now examining herself in the mirror and pulling splinters out of her skin.

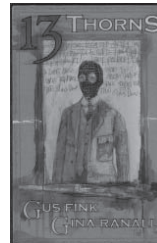
“Do you think that even works here?”

“Sure. Why not? It works everywhere.”

Zeke shrugged and dialed 911. It rang and rang.

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"I'll go down to the lobby," Emma said. "See if they can help us."

"Don't tell them about Brock," Carrie warned.

"Who?"

"The lobby people. We don't want to incite panic or anything."

"Whatever."

Emma left the room and walked down the tiled hallway until she reached the front desk. A rotund islander sat sleeping in his chair, head lolling back, drool slicking his chin.

"Sir?"

She noticed something off to her right, outside.

"Yeah... just a minute." The clerk wiped the drool from his chin and picked some crust from the corners of his eyes.

"Never mind."

"Thanks for waking me up then."

"Fuck you."

"Fuck you."

"Good comeback."

"Fuck your face."

Emma rolled her eyes.

Through the glass doors of the lobby, Emma had spotted Rogers' car, exactly where they had left it. She walked out into the humid night. Rogers was asleep in the front seat. Emma could hear his phone ringing. The windows were open. She wondered how the residents and tourists felt safe. She reached through the window and grabbed the phone.

"Hello," she said.

"I'd like to report an emergency."

"Zeke?"

"Yeah. Emma? Where are you?"

"Right out front. Our beloved and faithful sheriff is passed out in his car."

"Well get him up here."

**Rogers** surveyed the crime scene from the doorway. He said he didn't want to get any closer. He already felt queasy.

"Looks like he's the victim of a rapid enema machine."

"A what?" Zeke asked.

"A rapid enema machine. It's a machine that gives enemas in rapid succession. If it's turned up too high, it'll suck the bowels right out."

"I've never heard of one of those. Why would someone need one of those?"

"Well, it's theoretical, but that's what it looks like."

"So you just made that up?"

"I theorized it. We need to get that body out of here."

"We?"

"Yeah. Well, you guys. I'll hurl if I come anywhere near it."

"Aren't you going to call an ambulance? An EMT? A coroner?"

"Dead. Dead. And dead."

"Shit."

"I told you I have a fuckin crisis on my hands."

"Fine. What do we need to do?"

"We need to get it down to the car and then we'll throw it in the ocean. That's the island way."

"Sounds like that's the lazy way. Don't you need it for evidence or something?"

"If we see a person with a rapid enema machine, I'll assume we have our man."

**They** rolled Brock's body into a tarp and loaded it into the trunk of the car. Zeke wondered why working with the Sheriff felt an awful lot like working with a serial killer.



Once at the beach, they rolled Brock's body into the water, but the tide kept bringing it back. Zeke was suddenly emotional.

"Let's go back to the car and hit some Guzzle Green," the Sheriff proposed.

The others followed, Zeke wiping away tears.

Once at the car, Rogers uncapped a bottle of Guzzle and took a swig before passing it to Emma, who did the same.

"Now," Rogers said, "you said this thing raped you?"

Emma nodded her head. "I'm pretty sure. My pussy feels sore. Almost raw."

"But you didn't get a look at him?"

"It was so dark."

"I think it's obvious what we need to do."

The bottle had made its way back to Rogers and he took another healthy swig. The others stared at him, awaiting his answer.

"We need to gather up all the remaining men on the island and you need to have sex with them."

"That's... retarded," Zeke said.

"We'll make them all sign releases. You can film it."

"Now it's starting to sound profitable. Emma? Are you up for that?"

"My pussy's really sore but... if it'll help crack the case of The Impregnator, I'm up for anything."

"Great." Rogers clapped his hands together. "We'll want to get started right away. Naturally, you'll have to fuck me."

"Can you get this?" Zeke pulled the camera from the backseat of the car and handed it to Carrie.

"Why? What are you doing?"

"Looking for clues."

Zeke hopped into the car and pulled away, watching Rogers stroke his comically small penis in the rearview mirror.

**Zeke** was terrible with directions and spent two hours driving around the island before he finally found the barn. An erection strained against his corduroys as he pulled to a stop. He walked to the barn doors and realized they were padlocked. If he were Brock, he would have just ripped the wooden doors off the barn. Thinking about Brock made him sad. He went back to the car and pulled the keys from the ignition. There were several keys on the ring. Hopefully, one of them would open the barn.

Zeke paused and made sure he really wanted to go through with this. Maybe this was the only way he could go through with it—in the name of research. Clue hunting.

He had never been with a pregnant woman before. It was something he had always fantasized about. When he was young, his mother was pregnant all the time. She had to have children so she could sell them for food. Zeke's mom and dad thought it was much easier to stay home and fuck and then sell their children than going out to get a real job. Zeke had always thought the pregnant form of a woman was how they were supposed to look.

Now was his chance. A pregnant woman. An absence of cameras. The acquisition of knowledge. It didn't get a lot more exciting for Zeke.

He unlocked the lock and pulled the door open.

The smell that greeted him was not pleasant.

He was sort of hoping they could do it in front of the other pregnant women, but Zeke didn't think he'd be able to put up with that stench.

Over the years, he'd learned that women enjoy sex as much as men. And if you

have 126 women in a room, the chances were good that at least one of them wouldn't care who it was she fucked.

He unbuttoned his pants and pulled his colossal cock out. It was fully erect and stood out at a right angle from his body.

"Who wants it?!"

Luckily, there was a woman close by so he didn't have to wander back into the stench of the barn. He let her out of the stall and took her back to the car. What followed was brutal, satisfying, and highly informative.

**Fucking** in the high noon sun had exhausted Emma. Nineteen guys later, she chugged a bottle of Guzzle Clear and threw herself into the ocean to get the sweat and come off her body. Her vagina was beyond sore. While she didn't mind all the sex, she wished they had found a suspect.

She had her suspicions about Rogers, but it had absolutely nothing to do with the length or girth of his penis.

On the beach, Carrie stripped off her clothes and waded out to Emma.

"Any luck?" Carrie asked.

"None." Emma stuck out her bottom lip.

"Who would do something like this?"

"I don't know. There doesn't seem to be a lot of people here."

"Why would someone do something like this? I guess that should be the first question."

Emma splashed at the warm, clear water. "Money?"

"But if their money's in tourism and you impregnate or kill the whores who bring the tourists... That just doesn't seem logical."

"Maybe someone wants to turn the island into a baby factory."

"That practice is still frowned upon by the mainstream."

"Maybe we should just match the DNA from the fetuses."

"You think this place has a lab or anybody who'd know how to do it?"

"Maybe it's a spite crime."

"Like revenge?"

"Could be."

"Look." Carrie pointed further up on the beach. Rogers appeared to be arguing with a bald man in a black suit. "Who's that?"

"That was guy number six."

"Oh, right. I didn't recognize him with the suit."

The men continued to argue, pointing back toward the town and the middle of the island. Things became more animated and the large man in the suit punched Rogers in the stomach, doubling him over.

Emma headed for the shore on rubbery legs. "We need to help."

Carrie reluctantly followed her.

By the time they made it up to the beach, the man had already left. Rogers was collapsed on the sand, dramatically holding his head and kicking his legs.

Carrie noticed a strange deformity on his right arm and couldn't help asking him about it. "What's wrong with your arm?" It looked like he was missing an elbow.

"Jesus, think you could help me up?"

Emma helped him up while Carrie continued to study the odd depression on his arm.

"So you gonna tell me or not?"

"That." He pointed to it, spitting sand from his mouth. "I was born without an elbow, that's all."

"That's stupid. I've never heard of that."

Emma placed a consoling hand on Rogers' shoulder. "Who was that man?"

“That guy... Oh, just an old friend.”

“You know,” Carrie said, “if we’re looking for suspects, you shouldn’t keep things secret from us.”

“It was Dean Mahoney. He’s not a suspect. Is he, Emma?”

“Definitely not.” She held her index and forefinger two inches apart.

“So who is he?”

“He’s just a guy I owe money too, all right?”

“Maybe he’s working with The Impregnator.”

“The only person Mahoney works for is Mahoney.”

Carrie started to say something else when Zeke pulled up in the car, cutting her off.

“I think I have a clue!” Zeke called from the car. He opened the door and stepped out, holding something up in the air.

“What the hell is that?” Emma cried.

“It’s a fetus!” Zeke smiled for the first time Emma could remember.

“EW, what does a fetus have to do with anything?” Emma asked.

Zeke must have been hitting some sort of Guzzle on the way back. Or maybe he was just excited. He hopped back and forth, holding the fetus around one ankle and wagging it in front of Rogers and the girls.

“Is it still alive?” Carrie asked. “Maybe you shouldn’t be handling it like that.”

“No. It’s okay. I had to snap its neck.”

“Zeke!” Emma cried.

“No, it’s okay, Em. It isn’t human.”

“Looks human.”

“No. It’s not. It’s a demon baby. I had to kill it because it kept trying to eat my heart. See? See?” He held the fetus’ head in

his left hand and pulled back its upper lip. Perfectly formed teeth grew from the gums. Most of them were pointed. Then he poked its navel. “See? See here? No umbilical cord or anything. It just fucking crawled out!”

“Out of the pussy?” Emma asked.

“I think it’s called a womb,” Carrie said.

“But it still has to come through the pussy.”

“It’s actually a vagina.”

“Whatever. You’re a fucking prude. I still don’t think Zeke should have killed it.”

Rogers stood behind the girls, chewing on his thumb. He looked nervous or maybe nauseated.

“But if it had been a full grown demon trying to eat your heart out, it would have been okay, right?” Zeke goaded.

“Well...”

“So I was just being proactive.”

“And this is your big clue?” Carrie asked. “You were in the barn with all the pregnant women, weren’t you?”

“I actually took one woman into the car. The barn smelled foul. I don’t think they have any bathrooms in there. And they might have lactation wars when they get bored. Anyway, I’ve always heard that one of the best ways to induce labor was through sex.”

“There are other ways,” Carrie said.

“Look, we all have needs, okay? Anyway, I almost lost my penis as a result.” Zeke dropped the fetus to the ground. “Look at it.” He pulled his pants down and brandished his huge cock.

“My god!” Emma cried.

It was raw and gnawed-looking.

“I hope it heals,” Carrie said. “I hope it was worth it.”

“Regardless, I think we need to have a conference.”

Emma said, "It just won't be the same without Brock."

"I could stand in," Rogers said.

"I think we need to be alone," Carrie said.

Rogers looked dejected.

"We could use the girl," Zeke said, pointing to the lifeless-looking woman in the back seat. "They're all kind of hypnotized or drugged or something. Maybe we can shock her into remembering something."

"Maybe," Carrie said. "Sheriff? Can we get a ride back to the hotel?"

**They** piled into the car and headed back toward town. Emma gathered up the fetus and held it on her lap like a real baby. Zeke made out with the new girl.

"She's gamey," Carrie said. "She's going to have to shower before the conference."

"You're just jealous," Zeke said.

"Yes. I wish I had a demon fetus growing in me."

Emma looked at the demon, horrified. "Do you think I have one of these in me now?"

"It's possible," Zeke said. "Once we get back, you'll have to go to the doctor. You don't want to carry something like that to term."

"Fuck!" Emma rolled down the window and started to throw the demon out but Carrie stopped her.

"We might need to examine it."

"Carrie's right," Zeke said before continuing to make out with the girl. She looked mostly comatose. Maybe that's what Zeke liked about her.

Carrie spotted Dean Mahoney walking on the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street, his back to them.

"Isn't that..." But before she could even get his name out, Rogers swerved the

car and clipped Mahoney. The bumper hit his right knee, kicking his leg out from under him and sending him rolling off into the parking lot of an abandoned convenient store.

"Shit!" Emma said. "You just hit that guy, what's-his-face."

"Accidents will happen," Rogers said. "I wouldn't worry too much about it."

"But he could be hurt really bad."

"Next stop, Labrador Hotel!" Rogers was clearly changing the subject and refusing to talk about it.

Once at the hotel, they grabbed the demon and the woman and headed for the lobby doors. They were locked. A hand-lettered sign was taped to the door on the left. It read: CLOSED PERMANENTLY.

"That's no good," Emma said.

"Maybe we can confer in the car," Carrie said.

"I don't see any other choice," Zeke said.

Carrie said, "You're gonna have to leave Stinky out here."

"What about shock therapy? What about information? I think she needs to be part of the conference."

"Fine," Carrie said. "But there's no room for Rogers. Besides, he might be a suspect and we might have to talk about him."

They walked back to the car. Zeke asked Rogers if they could use his car to film *Doped Teen 3*. He said he didn't mind, got out of the car, and leaned against the hood. Zeke guessed they would just have to whisper if they needed to talk about him.

**The** conference was long and vigorous. Emma was sexed out and Zeke's penis was like raw hamburger so it took them forever to come. The other

girl was unresponsive and kept dozing off or passing out. Her vagina was loose and bloody from delivering the demon. The demon lay on the dash the entire time. Rogers stood outside the car and played with himself through the pocket of his shorts while looking back over his shoulder and then pretending he hadn't been looking.

They were going to question the girl as soon as they finished but she drifted off and they were unable to wake her up.

Zeke checked her pulse.

"Dead," he said.

"Dead?" Emma asked.

"Dead," Zeke repeated.

"Who's dead?" Rogers asked.

"The girl. You're not supposed to be listening."

"We should call 911 again," Carrie said.

Zeke found his cell phone in the pile of clothes on the floorboard and punched in the digits.

Rogers' phone rang and he answered, "Scurvy Island emergency."

"Sheriff?"

"Yep."

"There's a dead girl in the car."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"Shouldn't we call an ambulance?"

"Are you an idiot? Didn't I tell you everyone was dead?"

"What about you? Don't you know CPR or something? Surely law enforcement must learn some of that stuff. Even security guards learn that."

"I'll see what I can do."

Rogers came around to the rear passenger side of the car, opened the door, and dragged the girl out. He laid her on the ground and began fondling her.

The Grassville Gang, still naked, stood around him and looked down with disapproval.

"Are you even trying?" Zeke asked.

"Why don't you go take a walk or something," Rogers said. He continued looking down at the dead girl. He might have been crying. "I know you just want to talk about me anyway. You think maybe I'm this sex monster, this Impregnator... But you're wrong."

Carrie said, "I guess we should put our clothes back on."

Zeke said, "Don't have sex with the corpse, okay?"

Rogers shook his head. "I can't promise anything. Remember to take your dead demon baby with you."

**The** remaining members of the Grassville Gang put on their clothes, grabbed their dead demon baby, and headed for the beach. Once at the beach, they walked along in the fading daylight, passing around a bottle of Guzzle Green. Carrie produced a dossier and began reading through it. She always had one of these. No one was really sure where it came from.

"Maybe we should sit down," she said.

They found a bench. Carrie and Zeke sat on the bench and Emma sat in the sand, facing them.

"So," Carrie began. "Nearly every male on the island is dead and nearly every female pregnant. We know the perpetrator is someone calling himself The Impregnator."

"And," Zeke raised a finger of proclamation, "he may not necessarily be human."

Carrie continued to flip through the dossier. "I would say with all the women

getting pregnant within a few days of each other, he's not human at all."

"Or he's superhuman." Emma giggled. "Maybe we should hire him to be part of the Gang."

"This is serious, Em." Carrie kicked sand at her.

"One man was filled with helium. One man was beaten to death with a shoe. One man was sodomized to death with a chair. Grisly. One man drowned in his toilet. One man choked to death on an ice cream cone. One man..."

Zeke waved a hand. "We get the point."

"So why would someone do this?"

"It sounds like someone wants the island to himself."

"But who?"

"Sheriff Rogers comes to mind."

"But Emma had sex with both Rogers and The Impregnator and said they were nothing alike."

"I've been thinking," Emma said. "About my test. I don't know how accurate it is."

Carrie looked up from her dossier. "What do you mean? I thought your vag was a hundred percent accurate."

"It usually is. But it was dark when The Impregnator raped me. What if he was wearing some kind of prosthetic? Do you want to hear my theory?"

Zeke and Carrie both nodded their heads.

"I think this Impregnator character does have a prosthetic penis. And I think he's outfitted it with some kind of demon semen."

"Demon semen?" Carrie asked.

"Yes. Some chemically altered substance he's been shooting into the girls. How else could he get so many of them pregnant in such a short period of time?"

"And they would have to be ovulating within a few days of each other..." Carrie said.

"And none of them could be on birth control or anything..." Zeke said.

"Unless," Emma said. "The demon seed just needs a warm body and not necessarily a womb."

"That's a good point," Zeke said. "But then why wouldn't he have just used the men, too?"

"Who knows," Emma said.

"Maybe he did use the men. Did anyone check to see if they were pregnant?"

Zeke stood up quickly. "Let's go to the cemetery and dig up a body!"

Carrie pulled him back down to the bench. "They don't use cemeteries, remember? They just throw them in the ocean. That's the island way."

"Again," Zeke said. "Who could it be?"

Carrie stood up from the bench. "I think we need to find Rogers and ask him a few more questions."

The sun was now almost completely gone from the sky, sinking into the ocean and turning it a dazzling orange. Zeke thought it looked a lot like Hell.

He noticed the tide creeping in at an alarming rate.

On closer inspection, it wasn't the tide at all.



“Demon babies!”

Zeke shouted.

Carrie squinted her eyes.

Emma turned around.

“Oh, fuck!” Carrie shouted.

“Quick,” Zeke said. “We need to get to the car and get out to the barn. These things were probably incubating in the corpses tossed out to sea.”

“And we need to get into the van. Get the weapons out,” Carrie said.

“You girls go get the car. I’ll get the shit out of the van.”

They stood in a circle, even though they didn’t really have time, and put all their hands on top of one another. “Grassville Gang to the rescue. Grassville Gang forever!” And they brought their hands up into the air, the horde of demon babies only a few feet away.

Carrie and Emma began running toward town.

Zeke began running for the van, which was only a little way down the beach.

The demon babies were not hard to outrun, even though they were able to chug along on their legs rather than crawl. Zeke made it to the van, panting and tired, with a few minutes to spare. Beside the driver’s side of the van was an odd shape on the ground. Only, it wasn’t really odd. Just out of place. For a brief moment, Zeke thought it was Brock. Drawing closer, he saw that it was Brock.

Had he somehow still been alive?

Had he crawled back here to the van to try and fix it in his final moments of life? Even after his closest friends had thrown him into the ocean, watched him wash back up onto shore, and then left him for dead?

But now he was definitely dead.

Lying out in the sun all day had not done great things for him.

Zeke tried not to become emotional as he crouched down beside him and ran his fingertips along Brock’s red bandana. There wasn’t any time to be emotional.

“We’ll miss you, buddy.”

Zeke looked at the wheel of the van, hoping the tire would be there, hoping the van would be fixed.

But it wasn’t.

He opened the doors at the back of the van. He crawled inside and frantically grabbed their weapons. He preferred a battle axe. There was something very traditional about it. Brock had used a flame thrower. Emma used a small chainsaw and Carrie used a garrote.

It was a lot to carry.

Turning to step out of the van, Zeke was confronted with three demon babies, hissing as their little hands clutched the shiny chrome bumper.

Zeke primed the flame thrower and strapped it onto his back. He pulled the trigger and flames burst from the barrel.

“This is for you, Brock!” Zeke thought that was something Brock would have said. He pulled the trigger again.

Then he leapt from the van, through the stench of fuel and burning baby demon flesh, and ran into the early dark.

As soon as they had taken off running, Emma had tossed the dead demon baby over her shoulder, hoping it would ward off more of the demons. They had run as hard as they could.

Now, halfway into town, Emma stopped.

She leaned against a palm tree and stuck her hand down her pants.

Carrie stopped and walked toward her. "Come on, Em. Now's not the time to rub one out."

"Ow, my pussy's sore. And it itches." She giggled. "And kind of tickles."

She pulled her hand out of her pants.

Carrie knew she couldn't have crab lice because she didn't have any pubic hair. She moved closer to see what Emma held between her thumb and forefinger.

"What is it?" Emma had her eyes closed, holding her hand as far as she could away from her body.

"It looks like a very tiny demon baby." Carrie took it from her. It was almost microscopic, but it was definitely a demon baby.

She threw it to the sidewalk and stomped it with her boot.

Looking back, she saw the demon horde approaching.

"We need to go. Quickly."

They continued running back into town.

**Zeke** was not used to long distance running. Apparently, it used completely different muscles than lengthy and borderline supernatural sex.

Or maybe it was the extra weaponry he carried.

His vision blurred.

He knew the demon babies were behind him.

He tried to run back to where Rogers' car was parked in front of the Hotel Labrador, but was afraid his awful sense of direction would get him lost and in trouble.

Profuse amounts of sweat beaded on

and rolled down his skin.

Was that a dune buggy in front of him?

It looked like it was in the middle of the street. An odd sight since they had hardly seen any cars on the road since arriving.

The dune buggy's lights flipped on. Bright. Blinding.

Zeke drew to a stop, his breathing ragged.

He heard the high whine of the dune buggy in front of him, the engine revving, the tires gripping the road and squealing toward him.

Behind him, the angry and hungry sounds of the demon horde.

Just as the dune buggy closed in on him, he dived to his right, rolling on the ground and pulling himself up quickly, readying his battle axe.

The dune buggy plowed through the demon horde.

Was someone here to help him?

Maybe he just didn't know the demon horde was there. It must have taken out four or five. They began crawling all over the dune buggy. Zeke still couldn't see the driver.

He wanted to run but, if the driver of the dune buggy had tried to help him, he didn't want to abandon him to the demon horde.

Ready to swing the battle axe, he approached the dune buggy.

The little demons were crawling all over the driver.

Maybe it was too late.

Then the driver stood up in the dune buggy.

He was huge. Heavily muscled. Red. Winged.

Zeke noticed the latter as he spread his arms, the baby demons lining them like birds come to roost.



Then Zeke noticed the huge appendage dangling between his legs.

This thing, Zeke thought. This thing is definitely not human.

Now that he didn't care about torching them all, Zeke fastened the battle axe to his belt and primed the flame thrower.

"Halt!" The Impregnator shouted at him. "The Grassville Gang stands no chance against The Impregnator and his minions. If you kill me... everyone dies."

Zeke wasn't sure what he was talking about. Wasn't everyone already dead? Maybe the women were still alive. But they were dazed, traumatized, possibly lobotomized.

Zeke shot a spray of flame toward the dune buggy and took off running in the direction he had originally intended. He ran off the road, zigzagging around palm trees, stands filled with employment guides and free newspapers, benches, and parking meters. If there was something that could potentially fuck a dune buggy up very badly, he ran around it.

The Impregnator followed him for a couple of blocks and then abruptly slammed on his brakes and headed in the opposite direction.

Zeke looked back over his shoulder to make sure there were no demon babies following him, slammed into a palm tree, and hit the ground with a clanging of weapons. He sat there for a few moments. The air was still. The humidity was intense.

In the distance, he heard the drone of the dune buggy and the high pitched cackle of The Impregnator.

He needed to find the girls.

They needed to get to the barn.

He couldn't help but think something very bad was going to happen.

“Shit!”

“Fuck!”

“Where the fuck is he?” Carrie said.

Approaching the Hotel Labrador, there was no sign of Rogers' car.

“The shit skipped out,” Carrie said.

“And left the girl behind,” Emma said.

The girl lay face down on the sidewalk.

“He didn't even have the decency to put her clothes back on.” Carrie shook her head in disgust.

“What a fucking goat's ass.”

“What do we do now?”

“Zeke said something about meeting at the barn.”

“No way.” Carrie shook her head again. “There's no way I'm going there without my weapon.”

“It's just a bunch of pregnant ladies.”

“Are you crazy?! They're pregnant with demons! Demons, Emma! Are you so fucking oblivious you don't realize some really bad shit is going on here? Because if you don't, you seem to be the last one.” Carrie swept her hands around her, motioning to the dark and hushed town.

Emma slapped Carrie hard, in the face.

Carrie punched Emma in the stomach.

It wasn't long before they were pulling at each other's hair and ripping clothes that would miraculously mend only moments later. Then they were on the sidewalk, tongues and fingers everywhere. Dildoes appeared out of nowhere. Five minutes later, the island shook with the crescendo of their simultaneous orgasms.

Rolling off one another, stickily, they stared dazedly into the night...

...and into a net dropping down over them. The net closed and they were lifted up and slung over the back of The Impregnator, thrown into the back of his dune buggy, and speeding away from the hotel.

**When** Zeke finally reached the Hotel Labrador, he was the only one there.

No girls.

No Rogers.

Just the girls' clothes.

He was exhausted. But he was also horny.

He picked up the girls' clothes, buried his face in their underwear.

He pulled his pants down and masturbated.

Then he went in search of a bike shop.

**Soon** they were cruising through the dark night in the back of The Impregnator's gasoline-reeking dune buggy. There was another smell coming from The Impregnator. An awful smell. It smelled like death and old come and spoiled milk and maybe some shit, as well.

"You better let us out of here." Carrie struggled against the cargo netting.

"I'm afraid I can't do that," The Impregnator said. His voice was sinister. Was it electronically altered? It didn't sound like any type of voice either of the girls had heard before, save the abbreviated conference they'd had their first night here.

"I'll rip your cock off? And shove it down your throat?" Emma tried to threaten him but it came out in her porno voice and was entirely unconvincing.

"I'm afraid not. All I need to do is get you back to the barn and lure that other boy there. I have an especially ridiculous death planned for him. And as soon as he's gone, the island will be mine. ALL MINE!" The Impregnator laughed giddily.

"And what about us?" Carrie moved as close as possible to him, trying to hiss in his ear. It wasn't hard. The dune buggy wasn't

very large. "You'll never impregnate us..."

The Impregnator laughed again. "But I already have." And he looked smarmily over his shoulder.

"We aborted Emma's," Carrie said.

"I gave you both another one. While I was carrying you to the buggy."

"My pussy is kind of sore," Emma said. "Again."

"I told you," The Impregnator half-sang.

"You're forgetting one thing about the Grassville Gang," Carrie said.

"And what's that, darling?"

"We like to solve crime almost as much as we like to fuck."

"Liking and doing are two separate things." The Impregnator laughed and stomped the accelerator, throwing the girls back against the roll bars.

**Zeke** found something even better than a bike. He found a pedal car. It had two big bicycle tires on back and a smaller tire up front. It had an orange flag on a stick attached to the back of it. The flag made Zeke think of golf. He hated golf. He tore the flag and the skinny pole off and threw them into the street. He stowed the weapons in the wire basket between the two back tires. He positioned himself in the pedal car. He was almost lying down. It took him a minute to get situated. Then, his eyes clouded with hate, he pedaled furiously, hoping he was traveling in the right direction.

**The** Impregnator and the girls reached the barn, the dune buggy skidding to a vicious halt.

The Impregnator lifted the net and suspended it from a nearby tree.

The demon baby horde surrounded the barn.

They parted for The Impregnator.

“Even if you get Zeke, Sheriff Rogers will stop you!” Emma shouted in a moment of desperation.

The Impregnator turned and approached the net. He batted savagely at it. “Don’t you ever mention that name to me. That man is an unlanced anal wart. That man is a truckload of AIDS. That man is worthless... And you can rest assured that he’s long gone.”

“But he’s the one who called us for help.”

“After letting this go on for how long? He’s too stupid to exist.”

“He’ll...”

“Shhh...” The Impregnator held a taloned finger up to his lips. “There are other things to do at the moment.”

“But—”

The Impregnator struck the net again. “Please be quiet. Please? Can you do that? Or do you want me to feed your cunt to your friend?”

Emma was silent.

“Very good.”

The Impregnator strolled back to the barn, flourishing his cape and switching his tail.

What had they gotten themselves into?

**Zeke** carried the girls’ clothes in his lap. He knew they wouldn’t have just gone off and left them. That meant The Impregnator probably had them. Zeke couldn’t just go storming the barn. He would have to sneak.

Somewhere ahead of him, he heard the most awful sound.

Like a knight or an asshole, he followed.

**“Witness** the birthing!” The Impregnator cried out.

He threw open the barn doors and all the women came dazedly wandering out.

They were all nearly barking with screams.

The first one dropped to the ground and spread her legs. Emma wondered how she could have let her vagina get so hairy, how anyone could just let themselves go like that. She guessed if you were pregnant it just didn’t matter.

The woman screamed and breathed rapidly.

Another woman dropped down next to her and began doing the same.

“The labor of multitudes!” The Impregnator shouted.

Carrie and Emma watched open-mouthed as the first woman’s vagina ripped open in a shower of blood. A demon baby clawed his way out and crawled into the dirt.

“In only moments, my demon army will be complete.”

“Not so fast, Impregnator!”

The girls heard the voice off to their right. As best they could, they turned in the net.

**“Zeke!”** they shouted in unison.

Zeke turned toward them and hurled his battle axe and their clothes. The axe sliced through the net and the girls landed on their feet, miraculously clothed, only a second later.

“Demons attack!” The Impregnator shouted. “I will not let you ruin my moment of triumph, Grassville Gang!”

One group of demons moved toward Zeke and another group moved toward the girls.

Zeke threw them their weapons.

They threw him his battle axe.

More women dropped to the ground. The Impregnator began seizing them, reaching up into their vaginas, and forcefully pulling the demon babies out, tossing them onto the dirt where they landed and scampered toward their prey.

Zeke spent too much time trying to prime the flame thrower. One of the demons clambered up his leg and tried to bite his neck. Not knowing what else to do, Zeke gnashed his teeth, taking a hunk of the baby demon flesh and accidentally swallowing it.

He brought the battle axe down on another one in front of him, splitting it in half.

He looked over at the girls. They were completely surrounded. The Impregnator was now forcing the pregnant women to the ground as they exited the barn, ripping the demons from between their legs. The night was alive with the screams of laboring women and the scent of their blood. Zeke didn't see any way out of this.

He started to feel weird.

Dizzy.

He dropped to his knees.

He kind of felt like vomiting but he fought to keep his gorge down.

It felt like he was spinning but he also felt... stronger.

A demon baby crouched at his ankle, sprang toward him, and latched on.

Zeke didn't feel a thing.

He picked the demon baby up and ripped it in half, saving a chunk to shove down his throat.

He turned to the girls.

"Emma! Carrie!" Even his voice was more powerful.

Emma finished sawing two of the demons' heads off at once. Carrie finished dragging the garrote through a neck and the

girls turned toward him.

"You have to eat the babies! It'll make you stronger!"

Carrie garroted another one and drank from the geyser of blood shooting from its neck. Emma took off a tiny hand and popped it into her mouth.

In only a few seconds, they felt indestructible.

Now the Grassville Gang had the distinct feeling that the tide had turned. They fought their way toward where The Impregnator crouched. They also ripped fetuses from the womb, ripped the babies in half, and took wild, random bites.

And just when they closed in on The Impregnator...

...he was nowhere to be seen.

In the distance, they heard his laughter. Around them, the demons' mothers were screaming and dying. The demon babies were all dismembered and either laid twitching on the ground or were in a state of retreat.

"What do we do?" Emma asked.

"We have to get The Impregnator," Carrie said.

Zeke nodded his affirmation.

The Grassville Gang loaded up in the dune buggy and shot back toward town.

Toward the Sheriff's office.

They reached the Sheriff's office to find Rogers' car haphazardly parked across the sidewalk. The front door was broken from its hinges. The window was shattered.

From inside the office, The Impregnator shouted, "You'll never stop me! You can never come between me and my life's work!"

Zeke approached the door and

cautioned the girls. "Careful. It's slippery."

Once in the office, he flipped on the lights to reveal The Impregnator ensnared in a finely constructed prison of bondage cord, novelty handcuffs, dildoes, and fake vaginas.

Zeke approached cautiously.

"Who did this?" Carrie asked.

"You see," Zeke began, "when I found your clothes lying on the sidewalk, I naturally assumed The Impregnator had taken you prisoner. I quickly acted on our suspicions and assumed it had to be Sheriff Rogers. I knew he would have to come back to his office sooner or later so I broke into the Hotel Labrador and used whatever supplies I could find to construct this trap. He walks in the door, slides on the lubricant, and falls victim to the tensile strength of bondage rope and various latex products."

Zeke sauntered over to The Impregnator, placed his hand on the top of his head, clutched his mask and, yanking it away, said, "Girls, I give you Sheriff Rogers."

The face of Rogers was before all of them.

"I'm afraid you're not correct, Zeke," Emma said.

"What do you mean? That's Rogers."

"Yes. It is a Rogers. But this is the Sheriff's evil Siamese twin."

Zeke shook his head. "You must be joking."

"I'm afraid not." She approached The Impregnator and ripped away the sleeve of his left arm. "While The Impregnator was raping me, I noticed this unique deformity."

She pointed midway down his arm.

"A missing elbow!" they all shouted.

"That's right," Emma said. "Just like Sheriff Rogers. Only his was on the other arm."

"Where they were separated at birth!" Carrie said.

"Exactly. Sheriff Rogers had no reason

to do these things but he did have a reason to wait so long to report them. He didn't want to sentence his only brother. Unfortunately, his brother was almost able to turn the complete island into his secret demon training ground and prepare for world domination!"

"And I would have gotten away with it too if it wasn't for you filthy pornographers."

"So Sheriff Rogers is innocent..."

"Well, not entirely," a voice said from the back of the office. Sheriff Rogers emerged. "This island's ruin is as much my fault as Lenny's... my brother's. I'd invested in everything until I practically owned the entire island. But I'm not good with money. I'm addicted to Guzzle and prostitutes and this is the wrong place for that. Eventually, I just couldn't make payments on my holdings. Everything fell into disrepair. The fewer tourists was a blessing at first. Things weren't so embarrassing..."

The Sheriff brought a hand up to his eyes and wiped the tears away.

"But you didn't do anything wrong," Carrie said. "You're just stupid."

The Sheriff nodded.

"So what now?" Emma said.

"Well," Zeke said. "I think we leave The Impregnator right here, get the hell off this island, and let the Feds sort it out."

"Only one thing left to do," Carrie said. She approached The Impregnator and pulled a blade from the waistband of her skirt. While Zeke braced The Impregnator's head, she carved a "G.G." into his forehead.

Reaching around behind The Impregnator, she pulled a canister from his back.

"Nooo!" The Impregnator howled. "Not my secret alchemical formula!"

"That must be the demon semen," Emma said.

There was a tube running down to the prosthetic penis outfitted in his costume. Carrie pulled the tube free and began spurting the semen on The Impregnator while he wept tears of humiliation.

**I**t was dawn by the time they had finished. Stepping outside, the air had cooled considerably.

“Say,” Sheriff Rogers said, “there really isn’t too much here for me. Seeing as how you guys lost one, does that mean you have room for one more? I kind of like to solve crime. And I really like to fuck.”

Carrie said, “Your penis isn’t very large but, I guess if it’s okay with everyone else, we could give you a trial run.”

“You ever take it up the ass before?” Zeke asked.

The Sheriff didn’t answer.

When they reached the van, they remembered it was damaged.

Zeke went around front to reinspect the axle.

“Hey!” he called to the others. “Look at this!”

The wheel was back on the van.

“How did this happen?” Zeke asked.

“I wasn’t just hiding out from trouble,” Rogers said.

“Welcome aboard,” Carrie said. She and Emma slid the side doors open and crawled in.

Zeke was excited about finally being able to fly the van but, when he opened the door, Brock sat in the driver’s seat.

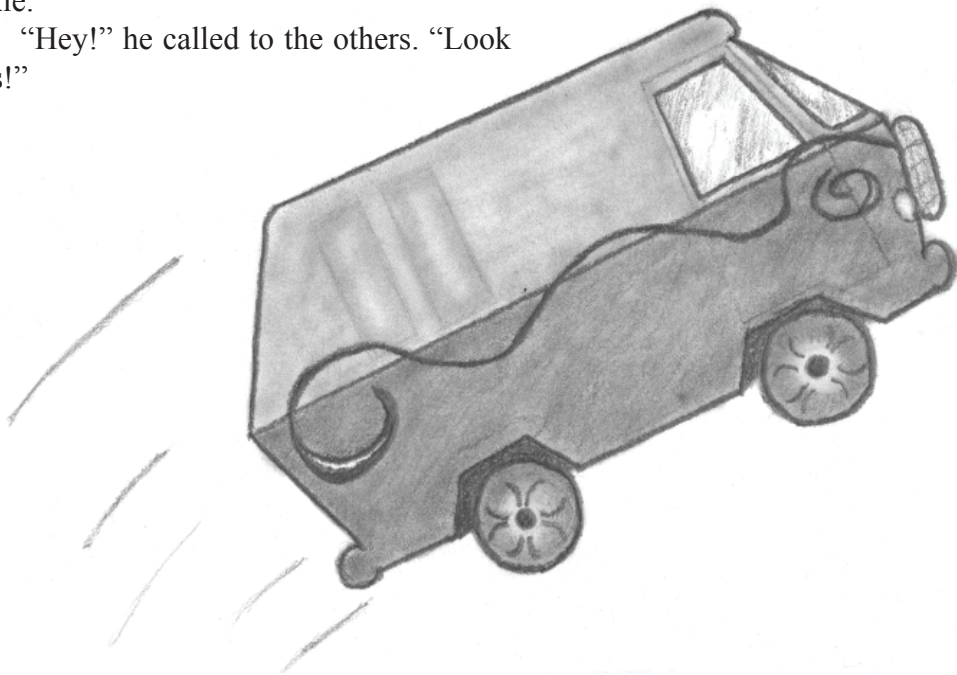
Brock turned and said in a voice more powerful than he should have possessed, “Hope you’re into necrophilia, buddy!”

Zeke, realizing he was into anything, climbed into the passenger side of the van.

Rogers climbed on top of him and began giving him a seductively hideous lap dance.

Brock powered the van down the street and bellowed, “It’s a good thing this baby can flyyy!” in his dumb guy zombie voice.

And Zeke, he showed the Sheriff the super special lever.



*Michael Gibbs is a new voice in the bizarro movement. His fiction having previously appeared in the e-anthology Bradley Sands is a Dick (available for free online at [www.absurdistjournal.com](http://www.absurdistjournal.com))*

*His favorite flavor of ice cream is Ben & Jerry's Chocolate Fudge Brownies and his favorite movie is The Monster Squad. In a fight between Superman and Batman, he thinks Batman would win.*

## Puzzles

*by Michael James Gibbs*

A man sits at his work desk on the corner of 3rd and Wadsworth solving a Sudoku puzzle. He pencils a number 4 inside the last empty box, closes the thin booklet, and places it atop a stack of other Sudoku puzzle books. Absolute Sudoku. Black Belt Sudoku. Sudoku Mania. On his desk are three different stacks. One for unsolved puzzles, another for solved puzzles, and yet another stack for solved puzzles that have been double-checked for errors. The man sits at his desk each day for eight hours and works these puzzles.

He grabs a booklet off the unsolved stack. Hardcore Sudoku. Before starting on the next puzzle, the man simultaneously places a hand over each eye. He does this every five minutes or so to make sure that his eyeballs are not going to fall out. Once secure with the position of his eyes, he picks up his pencil, opens the booklet, and begins to quickly fill in the empty boxes. Full of pride in his skillful and swift Sudoku solving abilities, his mouth grows into a boomerang-shaped grin.

Something suddenly catches the man's attention through his peripheral vision, breaking his concentration. Such

distractions are rare for him while working on a puzzle.

He glances up.

A beautiful woman walks by wearing only a handheld Mardi Gras mask. The man's lids grow wide. His eyeballs pop out, roll across the desk, and fall into the busy street.

Cars zoom by as the eyeballs roll into the middle of the intersection. The man, now blind, slowly walks around the desk holding on to its smooth wooden edge for reference. He successfully steps down from the curb, gets on his hands and knees, and searches for his eyes. Cars skid to abrupt stops causing a chain of collisions.

Once he finds his eyes, the man stands up and rolls them around in his hand like Chinese Healing Balls before popping them back into their sockets. He looks around at the angry shouting drivers and smoking dented cars.

"I got my eyes," he says. "I'm okay now."

Walking back to his desk, he looks all around for the masked woman but she is nowhere in sight. He sits down and continues to work on the puzzle. The numbers do not come so easy now.

*Jordan Krall's stories of bodily-fluid bizarro have earned the praise of such notables as Tom Piccirilli and Edward Lee. Drawing influences from hardcore horror, trash cinema, and classic pulp fiction, Krall is the bizarro equivalent of Jim Thompson and Robert E. Howard.*

*The following story is a prequel to his Spaghetti Western tribute collection, Fistful of Feet, coming this fall from Eraserhead Press.*

## **The Pistol Burps** *by Jordan Krall*

The man named Calamaro walked across the plains of the Dakota Territory, dragging a wooden donkey behind him. He pulled the donkey using leather reins that he had found on an abandoned stagecoach thirty miles back near one of the defunct army forts. The stagecoach had been knocked over, its riders lost, either to bandits or to the elements; Calamaro did not know which and did not care. Their luggage was strewn across the landscape. Calamaro had searched but there was nothing of value left. Nothing, that is, except the leather reins.

It had been three days since he had seen a single person and Calamaro was beginning to think that he was perhaps walking in circles. There usually was some trace of civilization be it a group of desperate settlers or hostile Indians. He was about to stop and make camp when he saw a dozen Indian tipis on the horizon. Calamaro was hungry and so took the risk of walking towards the camp.

When he was a hundred yards away from the tipis, a group of young male Indians walked out to meet him. Their faces held no smiles, no cordial expression. Each of their fists was held tightly closed; the men seemed ready to strike at any moment.

Calamaro stopped walking and dropped the leather reins. He took off his hat and put it to his chest. He nodded his head in greeting. He did not know any Indian languages so he relied on body language to show them that he meant no harm.

The young Indian men relaxed just a bit but their eyes moved to the gun at Calamaro's hip.

Calamaro saw this and so raised his hands above his head, showing them that he had no intention of going for his pistol. That relaxed them a little more but not completely. One of the Indian braves approached Calamaro and grabbed the gun from its holster. The fact that Calamaro did not make any move to prevent this from happening convinced the Indians that the stranger did not have any ill intentions and so they motioned for him to follow them into their camp. The one who took his gun slipped it back into its holster.

Calamaro noticed that each tipi was painted a different color. One was white. The one next to it was dark green. Another was purple. The whole Indian camp looked like a rainbow of animal skins. There was a orange tipi that was bigger than the rest and that is where the men led Calamaro. There they stopped and waited until a wizened Indian walked out of it.



His hunger was getting to him so Calamaro moved his hand to his mouth, hoping that one of them would understand that he wanted food.

The old Indian said, "Can you speak?"

This shocked Calamaro. He wasn't expecting the Indian to speak English. The braves who had met him outside the camp had not made any attempt to communicate that way.

"Yes but I did not think you would."

The old man smiled with his mouth but not with his eyes. "White men do not think much of us, do they? Your language is not difficult to learn."

Calamaro expected there to be some animosity against him, being a white man, but he was not prepared to defend his race against the injustices that have been committed nor was he prepared to try to make amends. He preferred to stay out of it.

"Would you be able to spare food, water?" he asked.

At this point the younger Indians walked away but did not seem to lose interest in the stranger. They still kept their eyes on him and their ears were picking up every word.

"Yes, we could do that," the old Indian said. He looked over Calamaro's shoulder and made several motions with his hands. Within seconds, a pair of Indian children brought over a steaming piece of meat, an ear of corn, and a buffalo bladder full of water.

Calamaro nodded to the children and took the food from their hands. Without even sitting down he devoured the meat and the corn. Then he drank most of the water in two gulps, leaving only a small amount in the bladder. While he did this, the old Indian just stood and watched the stranger eat like a pig.

"Is good?" he asked.

"Yes. Thank you."

The old Indian smirked. This was the man from his visions; he was sure about it. The stranger who came from the sea and traveled across the landscape dragging an animal made of wood. Yes, this was the man.

He said, "What is your name?"

"Calamaro."

"You should sit down, Calamaro," the old man said. He felt a tinge of remorse for having to do this to the stranger but if his visions were correct, it had to be done.

Calamaro wasn't sure what the Indian meant but then he looked at the bladder full of water. Through the stretched-out skin he saw pieces of something floating in the water. He squeezed the water into his palm and saw what they were: dozens of tiny crabs swimming in his hand. That's when he felt dizzy and leaned over. He was unconscious before he even hit the ground.

For the next twelve hours the Indians watched over the stranger, waiting for the concoction to move through his system. Finally Calamaro was awoken by the sensation of pissing. He looked down to see a skinny Indian draining his urine into a bowl made out of tree bark.

Calamaro wasn't sure what was happening. Why were these Indians having him piss into a bowl? What had they given him to drink? He turned his head and saw the waste that they had collected. It was full of the tiny crabs, now dead.

The Indians used a stick to stir the urine and then the old man walked over. He put his hand on Calamaro's shoulder. "I am sorry but this had to be done."

"What had to be done?"

"This, this. Your water and the tiny bodies in there. Tonight we will use it. Drink it. It will bring more visions. It will tell us where to go next."

Calamaro squinted in disgust. Drink it? They were going to drink his piss? He shoved an Indian hand away that was still holding his pants down and he stood up.

Ten feet away, his wooden donkey was tied to a post; Calamaro walked over and untied it. He started dragging it out of the camp. He was not interested in watching the Indians and their strange ritual but instead would prefer to find a stream or pond to wash in.

Calamaro got only a few dozen feet away from the village when he saw the three figures on the horizon, coming from the southeast. He could see they weren't Indians. Immediately he felt a tinge of apprehension. There was going to be trouble; he knew it.

He walked back into the village.

The old Indian did not look surprised when he saw Calamaro approach him.

"You would be back. I knew that."

Calamaro said, "Three men." He pointed to the southeast. "Out there."

"Yes, we knew they would be back."

"Back? They were here before?"

The old Indian looked tired. "They came. Took four girls, young girls."

"Your men didn't fight them?"

"We don't have many guns like the white man."

Calamaro knew that was right. He did not recall seeing any firearms when he was in the Indian camp. "Who are they?"

"Soldiers."

They were probably ex-soldiers, Calamaro thought. They were plenty of men who had fought in the war and had neither the means nor the desire to settle down to live a civilian life. Instead they drifted, using their military experience to survive mostly by robbing and killing.

The three figures walked closer and Calamaro was able to see who they were.

One of the men was unusually tall, with only one arm and wearing a woman's bonnet. The second was old, fat and had a face covered in red tattoos. Calamaro was surprised when he saw the third. It was a boy, no older than thirteen or fourteen, he figured. Whatever the age, he looked too young to be keeping company with the other two men.

Leaving his wooden donkey with the old man, Calamaro walked slowly towards the three strangers. He did not make any gesture of greeting but only stared. His eyes were on the fat one since he took him to be the leader. Calamaro was shocked when the boy spoke first.

"Who the hell're you?"

Calamaro saw that the boy had no teeth and one of his eyes was made of grey glass. "Calamaro. You?"

The boy turned to the old, fat man. "You hear this, Coyle? This asshole wants to know who I am. Wanna tell him?"

Coyle gave a subservient smirk and said, "This here's the Clementine Kid."

"That's mighty impressive," Calamaro said. He had never heard the name before.

The tall one in the bonnet nodded his head but did not say a word. Calamaro looked at him and said, "And you?"

A gurgling sound came from the tall man's throat. "Bocka, bocka.."

The Clementine Kid said, "That's Smitty. He don't talk right. Never did. Not since I known him." He walked behind Smitty. Calamaro could not see what was happening. He only saw the Kid's arm wiggling behind Smitty's back. The Kid pulled his hand and wrist out; they were covered in yellowish goo.

Smitty gargled again but this time he said, "Caca, caca..."

"Sometimes Smitty just needs fixin, is all," the Kid said. "But now that we all know each other," he said, putting a hand on the gun

in his holster, "I think you need to throw your pistol this way and give us what you got. I'm sure you don't want no trouble. But we can give it if that's what you want."

Calamaro laughed. The chuckle escaped his throat before he had the chance to stop it. Normally he did not let his emotions out so quickly. He stared at the boy's glass eye as it twinkled in the sunlight. "That so?"

"Do what he says," Coyle said, pulling his own gun out and pointing it at Calamaro. "You don't want to know what the Kid could do to you."

"From what I hear, he can only do things to little girls. Or is that your hobby?"

The boy looked at Coyle and shook his head. "You let this stranger talk to you like that, you best take care of it." He motioned towards Calamaro.

Coyle took two steps forward and pulled his gun.

The fat man was fast, faster than Calamaro had expected. The bullet whizzed by his head and then each of the four men dispersed, spreading out in all directions. Calamaro had his gun out but was not willing to risk bullets until he had a clear shot. He sprinted back to the Indian camp and dodged behind his donkey.

"Come out, you bastard!" the boy yelled. Coyle repeated the same thing but Smitty said nothing but instead pointed his own gun towards the Indian camp. Then he pulled his bonnet off. His scalp was hairless and covered in the same red tattoos as Coyle had on his face.

Calamaro saw a group of young Indians slowly approaching him, hunched over. Some carried hatchets while others carried heavy sticks.

One of the Indians said, "We will help."

"They got guns." Calamaro was in no mood for their honorable attempts at chivalry. Those three strangers had already kidnapped a few young girls without any trouble at all so what did those Indian braves thing they were going to do now?

He motioned for them to get back and then stood up, leaning on the wooden donkey while bringing up his pistol. His eyes quickly caught sight of one of the men: the fat one, Coyle. That tattooed face was grinning. Calamaro wanted to blow it to pieces.

He pulled the trigger and the pistol burped.

A bullet went flying into Coyle's cheek, smashing bone and splitting skin. The back of his head exploded and pieces of skull fell to the ground like misshapen dice.

Smitty jumped into the air yelling "Caca! Caca!" and ran towards Calamaro. Before he could get to him, a hatchet flew from behind the donkey and struck him in his forehead. A flap of tattooed flesh flipped up like the brim of a hat. Smitty stopped. He had been holding his bonnet in one hand and his gun in the other. He dropped the weapon and brought his hand up to his head, feeling the skin flap. Tears welled up in his eyes. He brought the bonnet up to his head and put it on. Then he dropped to his knees, adjusting the bonnet, and then fell face first into the grass, dead.

The Clementine Kid screamed. It was a high-pitched yell, a childish roar of frustration as if a parent took away his toy. He pulled out a gun, a huge pistol that looked silly in the hand of a small boy. Calamaro had seen dozens of firearms in his life and had never seen one like that. It was pure white and looked like it was carved out of ivory.

Calamaro looked at the group of young Indians. He saw the one who had thrown the

hatchet at Smitty and nodded. Then he turned to the Kid and pointed his pistol.

“Stay there, kid.”

The boy did stop but was pointing his gun at the donkey. “What the hell is that? You keep things in there, don’t you? What’s in there? I want what’s in there.”

“No, you don’t,” Calamaro said. “I’ll let you go now. Maybe you can go home back to your ma and pa. You shouldn’t have been keeping company with those two anyhow.”

“That’s real funny,” the Clementine Kid said. He brought his empty hand to his face and dug a finger into his eye socket, plucking out his glass eye. He pulled his hand back and then sent it flying towards the donkey. The eye exploded in a flash of smoke and blue flame.

Calamaro rolled to the side and got on his stomach. He fired again, his pistol burping another bullet which grazed the boy’s head. He hadn’t missed. Calamaro would rather let the boy run away scared and perhaps a little bit smarter than to kill him.

The Clementine Kid dug in his pocket and pulled out another glass eye. He stuck it into his empty socket. Calamaro had seen something like that before, during the war. There had been one man who used a snail shell instead of a glass eye. It was strange how some men fiddled with their wounds like it was nothing at all.

It was evident that the bullet that had whizzed by the Kid had not deterred his intentions of getting the contents of the wooden donkey. He lifted his gun so he was aiming at Calamaro. The firearm glistened in the sunlight as the boy pulled the trigger. There was no sound from the gun; the only sound was the cry of the Indian that the bullet hit. Calamaro saw that it was the one

who had thrown the hatchet at Smitty.

The boy fired again. Calamaro felt his ear start to burn and realized that he’d been hit. His right ear lobe was bleeding onto his shoulder. It was time he had stopped caring about whether the kid got out of this alive. Maybe the Kid was better off dead.

He aimed his pistol but before he could pull the trigger, he was startled by the cries of the young Indians as they rushed past him towards the boy.

It was brutal.

Calamaro knew that the Kid had been behind the kidnappings of the Indian girls and that the girls probably died slow, painful deaths but he felt sick watching the boy get hacked to pieces. The Indians took the boy’s stash of glass eyes and smashed them against the ground, laughing as each eye exploded.

Finally he took the straps of his donkey and started pulling it out of the village. From behind him the old man approached and said, “You take this.” He held out a bladder full of liquid. “It is yours after all.”

Calamaro did not want to continue his journey with a buffalo bladder full of piss and dead crabs but he also did not want to cause any more trouble. He took it, wondering what would happen when the tribe drank the rest of the piss, what visions they would see, and what they would all mean. He never did believe in Indian witchcraft but there was something inside of him that did not want to tempt it.

Dragging his wooden donkey away from the Indian camp, Calamaro’s mind was far away from the recent events and was instead focusing on the gold that was hidden somewhere west. He heard it was in a certain area of the Nevada territory but it could be

### Bizarro Fiction

in any number of towns. There was Leonard, a mining town that was well-known for its young but experienced whores and to the south there was Starktown, a place that made its mark through the constant explosions caused by anti-government renegades who tried, unsuccessfully, to construct bombs to bring back to the Capital.

Then there was Screwhorse.

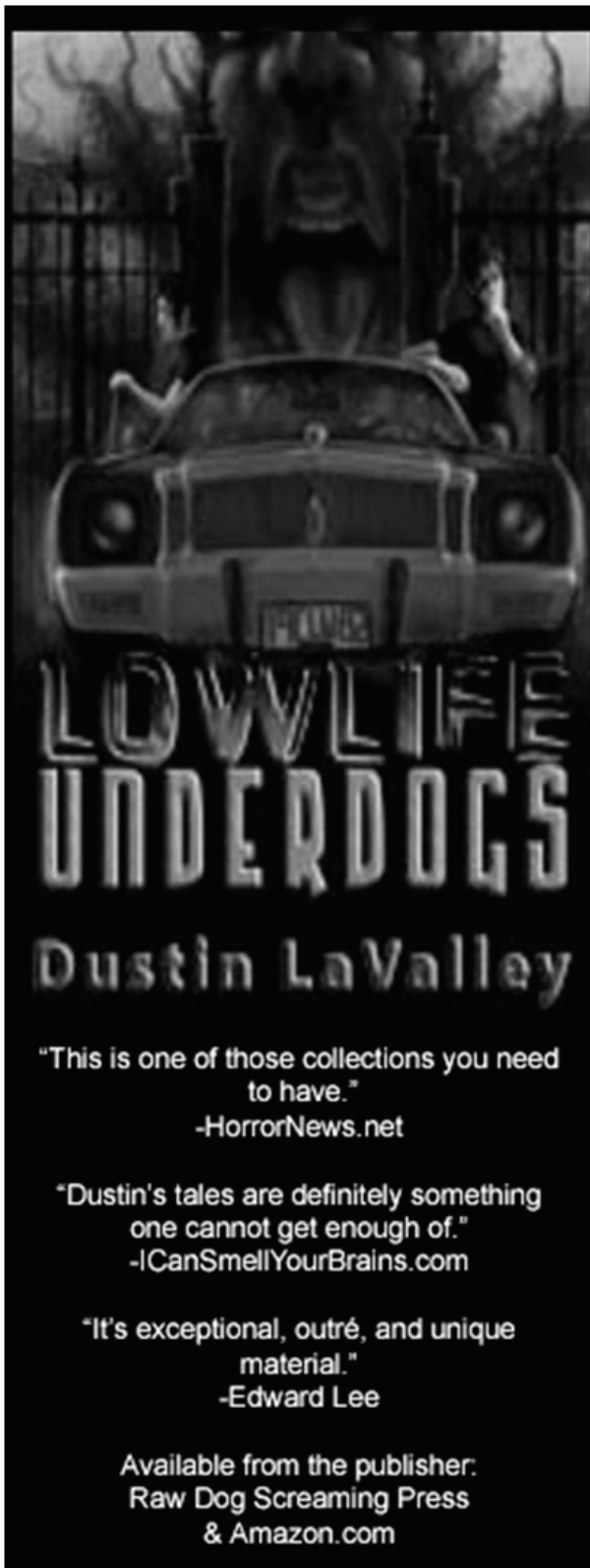
Calamaro had a feeling that he would find the gold there. He had heard rumors back east about that place. There was a brothel there that rivaled any that existed near the southern ports. There were supposedly many other pleasures and forms of entertainment that a man could not get anywhere else. But even if Screwhorse didn't have the gold, Calamaro figured he could use that time to rest and forget about the past. Maybe he could finally relieve his mind of those memories. Maybe he could finally find peace.

The sun beat down on the man named Calamaro as he headed west, dragging his wooden donkey behind him. The leather reins dug into the scar tissue on his palms and on his wrists. Blood dripped down from his right ear lobe and fell to the ground, splattering the grass and dirt like deep red droplets of rain.

## The Dream People

An online literary journal of the bizarre. Specializing in bizarro, absurdism, surrealism, experimental works, and mixed media.

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*It is well known that bizarro is highly influenced by film. So who better than Jeremy C Shipp to pay tribute to cult-splatter director Takashi Miike? I can think of no one and if you can, the next couple of pages will prove you wrong.*

*Victim shows why Shipp's two books, Vacation and Sheep and Wolves, have been praised by the likes of Jack Ketchum, John Skipp, and Piers Anthony. There is no chance that Showtime will be adapting this story.*

## **Victim**

### **A Story Inspired by Takashi Miike**

*by Jeremy C Shipp*

**M**y infant body rides a current of afterbirth and partially-hydrogenated oils onto a pile of inside-out Doritos wrappers. Inside-out, because my mother likes to lick up the crumbs.

The world is a scary place, but my cries are drowned out by the pyramid of televisions stacked against the wall. People say that a mother can discern her child's cry from a mass of wallowing hearts, but it's not so for the baby. Voices from all over the world tell me who to trust. I don't know what to believe.

Finally my mother manages to reposition her blubbery body enough to reach me with her hands. She picks me up by the feet. She looks at me, but she doesn't really see me. This is the first time I'm judged. It won't be the last.

"Man," she grunts. A bit of vomit slides down the sides of her mouth as she says the word. Then, with yellow rotting teeth, she chomps into the tip of my penis and spits it against the wall. It sticks there.

She scoots back, revealing a hole in the floor. Immediately, a horrible stench saturates the room. She holds me over the hole and I look down. What I see is a mountain of

shit almost filling the entire basement. The shit looks like it's rotting, if such a thing is possible.

I cry and cry, because there's nothing else to do.

Something happens to my mother's face. It softens. Maybe it's due to the chemicals in her food. Maybe she has diarrhea of the heart. Maybe it's something else entirely.

All I know is that my mother spares me from the hole.

She tosses me out the window instead.

**T**wenty years later, I land in the management office of an abandoned crayon factory overlooking an elementary school. More importantly, overlooking the playground.

How I sleep at night: I tell myself it's better this way. It's better they lose their innocence by my hand before the world has the chance to turn them into me.

So I peer through the scope. Little Sally Silverstein. She's my next target.

Someone taps me on the shoulder and says, "Excuse me?" and I misfire.

I spin around like a devil-possessed dervish. “What the fuck?” I say.

The man, dressed in some sort of furry pink tunic, says, “I was just wondering if you had any spare change.”

“No! Get out of here! I’m busy!”

“You know.” The man tilts his head. “You have beautiful eyes.”

“I...really?” I say. “You think so?”

“Yeah. And I’m not just saying that because I want your change.”

“Thank you. No one’s ever told me that before.”

“Can I have your change now?”

“Sure.” I fiddle in my pockets. “Sorry. I’d give you a bill, but I only have hundreds right now.”

The furry man burrows his hand near his crotch and pulls out a gun. “Give me your money or—”

A sharp pain munches at my left leg.

“Fuck!” I say. “You shot me!”

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to.”

“Sorry’s not going to pay my medical bills.”

“My finger slipped.”

“Don’t put your finger on the trigger unless you plan on firing. Jesus.”

“I’m new at this.”

“Obviously.”

“Can I still have the money?”

“Just leave!”

“Okay...” He hangs his head and walks away.

When I return to my scope, I see a crowd forming around a fallen bleeding little body. But it’s not Little Sally Silverstein.

It’s a boy.

I shouldn’t feel this way. Night after night, I shouldn’t dream about the dead boy wearing the tip of my penis like a kippah, soaring

around my room, raining acid tears from his ethereal flesh.

Corporate warfare often involves the assassination of children, and I’m usually the one pulling the trigger. They call me a goon but I like to think of myself as an important cog in the great American machine. Then again, I’m a psychopath, so what do I know?

What I do know is that I shouldn’t feel horrible about accidentally killing the boy when I feel nothing in regard to Little Sally Silverstein’s brain-bursting demise.

But I do.

I ask the boy, “What do you want? What do you want from me?!?” I scream louder than I ever do when I’m angry.

Eventually, he tells me. He says, “Take care of my family.”

So I use my connections to find out that the boy’s name is Peter Green, and he used to live three blocks from my house. I also learn that his funeral’s tomorrow. 3:00PM. I cancel my dental appointment.

**Outside** the funeral home, a clown with a pushcart says, “Cotton candy?” and I indulge. Moments later, a woman in a black dress rushes out. “There’s been a mistake,” she says. Something about an internet glitch. The clown frowns and smiles at the same time. He approaches me, apparently to recover the cotton candy, but I escape inside.

An old black woman hurls herself against the casket. Stickers cover the small wooden box, and when two men pull the woman off and drag her away, some of the stickers stick with her. A smiley face clings to one of her breasts and there’s a baseball bat on her forearm. All the while, she’s screaming, “My baby! My baby!” The photograph I was

given is three years old, but I'm fairly sure that Mrs. Green didn't transform into an old black woman during that period.

As they drag her by me, I overhear one of the men saying, "This is the last time, Martha. Next time we'll call the police."

"My baby!" she says.

Then they're gone.

I stand at the sidelines next to a shaking old man. Mrs. Green, the real Mrs. Green, thanks everyone for coming. Especially Ben, who traveled by ship and by bus to get here. There's something in Mrs. Green's voice that makes me think Ben delayed the funeral because he refused to fly on a fucking plane. And then she says, "The clown's gone, Uncle Lahpeeloot. You can sit down."

The shaking old man beside me shakes his head and says, "He could come back."

I catch a few glances that say, "Crazy old Uncle Lahpeeloot."

But I don't judge him. When you're feeling vulnerable, there's nothing quite like pressing your back against a wall.

Mr. Green keeps glancing at his watch. I don't judge him either.

Mrs. Green goes on to talk about her son. She talks about his love for origami and stickers. She says whenever anyone asks him his favorite food, he says, "Microwave dinners." The way she talks about him, it's like he's still alive.

Before I know it, I'm bawling my gorgeous eyes out. But don't take it the wrong way. I'm not considering anyone's feelings but my own. In all likelihood, Mr. and Mrs. Green will never see Peter again because of me. If there is life after death, then Peter will probably be a completely different person by the time they meet again. Heaven has to change a person. Maybe not for the better.

I know all this, but I'm not crying for Mr. or Mrs. Green or Peter.

I'm crying because when I die, no one will give a shit. I'll be shot to death or strangled. I'll be dropped and buried in an unmarked grave. If there is a God, even he won't shed a tear for me. A few corporate suits will mourn the loss of my services, but no one will mourn me. Not the real me.

I'm crying because this is the way it should be.

The real me shouldn't be missed.

I'm garbage.

I'm lost.

"Have you ever considered male modeling?"

I wipe away my tears. The service is over, and the man who spoke to me is Peter's father.

"I..." I clear my throat. "I can't say that I have."

"You're a very beautiful man," Mr. Green says.

"I'd prefer the word handsome."

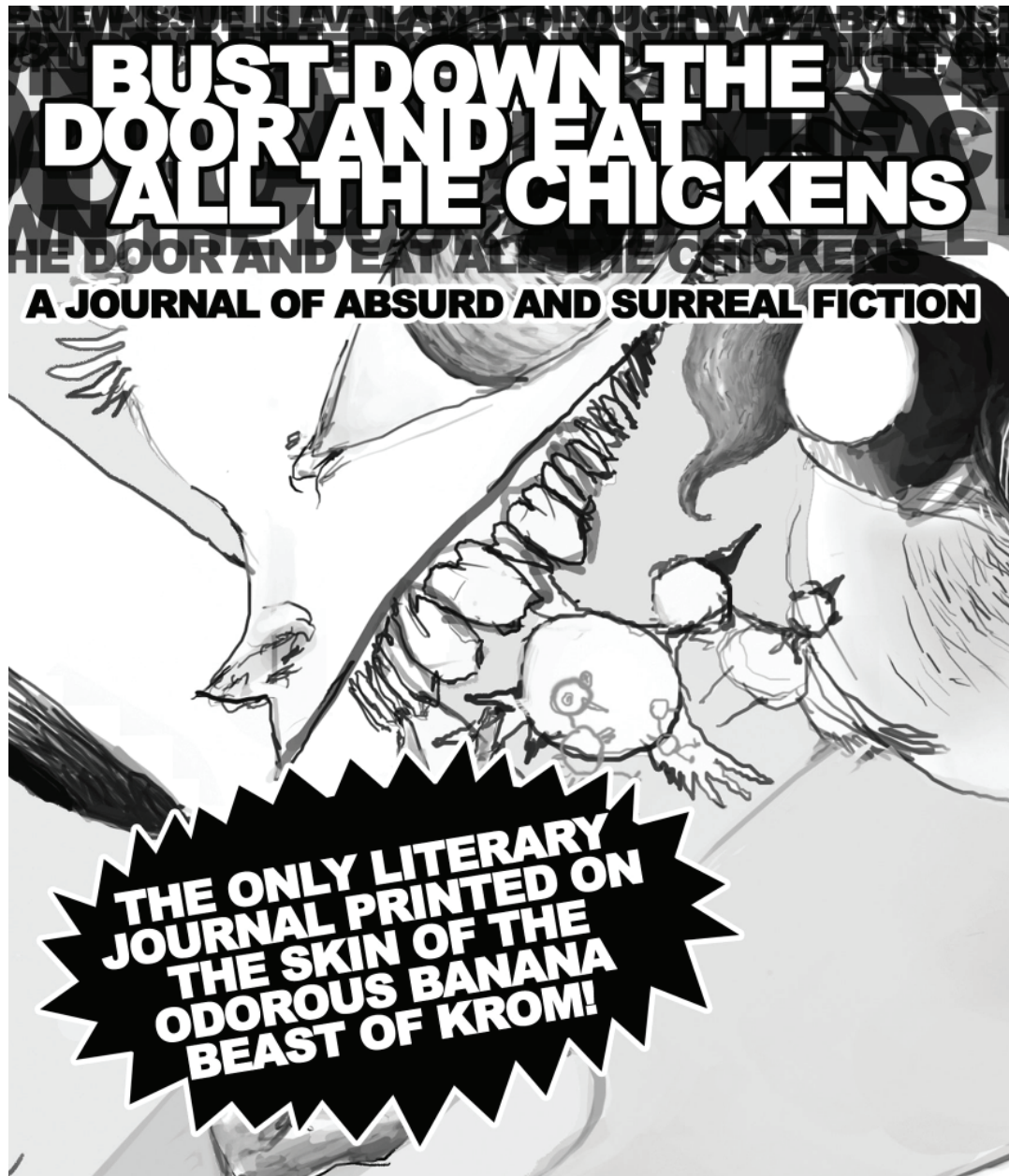
"No, no." He waves the thought away. "Handsome men are a dime a dozen. Beautiful men are the rare jewels." He gives me a card. "Call me."

"Thank you," I say.

He walks away, and I'm clutching the card, and I forget all about the duffel bag full of money at my feet. And my handwritten note that reads, "Hope this helps."

**In** my driveway, I remember. My hybrid's almost empty and I'd have to fill up to make it to the funeral home and back. But the stink of gasoline makes me sick. So do convenient stores. Thinking about all those people stuffing themselves with toxic food compels me to vomit a little in my mouth. After sitting





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in my car for a few moments, I decide to forget about the money and take a bubble bath.

So I do.

By the time I enter the basement, I'm smelling of lavender and tea tree oil.

Eberhard, on the other hand, smells like shit and disinfectant.

"Let me go!" he says. He thrashes about violently, more for show than anything else, obviously. The chains aren't going anywhere.

"Are you ready to talk?" I say.

"I told you! I don't know who Wakefield is!"

"My employers don't believe that."

"It's the truth!" He wrestles with his chains again. "For the love of God, let me go! I have a family!"

Like I haven't heard that one before.

"Cooperate, and you'll be able to see your wife and children again." I go for the pruning shears. "Where is Wakefield?"

"I don't know!"

Eberhard squirms as I position the two blades on either side of his big toe.

"Stop!" he says. "I'll tell you!"

"Alright. But keep in mind that we know which country Wakefield is hiding in. If you give me a location from the wrong country, I'll know that you're lying to me. If you lie, I'll do something a lot worse than chopping off your toe."

"Which country is he in?" he says, through sobs.

"I'm not going to tell you that, Eb. That wouldn't make any sense, now would it? Give me his location."

"I...I don't know!"

I squeeze hard and the toe rolls on the floor.

Eberhard screams louder when he finally looks down and sees the carnage.

"Would you say that I'm a beautiful man?" I say.

"God! God!" he says.

"Two people in the past few weeks have used the word beautiful to describe me."

"Let me go!"

"I can't remember a time before this when I was complemented on my looks. Have I suddenly become good-looking? Do I look different now than I did back when you contracted me for the Billy Hastings job six months ago?"

"I want to go home!"

"I'm trying to have a fucking conversation with you, Eb. Don't tell me that you want to fucking go home." In one swift movement, I shear off his fucking nose.

He's silent for a moment, and then he screams. It's not the pain he's yelling about. Losing a nose isn't the worst pain in the world, by far. It's the truth that hurts you. The knowledge that you're deformed. Eberhard used to be an ugly man, but now he's beyond that. He's hopeless.

"Tell me where he is and I'll let you go," I say.

"I don't know where he is!" Blood gushes down his mouth and chin.

I go for my razor blades.

I'm no mind-reader, but I know that he wishes he were stronger, so that he could break free and kill me. He wishes he were smarter, so that he could trick me or convince me to let him go. He wishes he were luckier, so that he could pull the location of Wakefield out of his ass and appease me.

**Sure**, he hates me, but he hates himself just as much. Maybe even more.

That's what victims do.

I wish I could hold him close and tell

him the truth. I wish I could tell him that he's fucked no matter what he does or says. But I can't. There are cameras on me. This is the job. This fucking game.

"There is no Wakefield," I want to say. Instead, I go for the eyes.

**TWO** phone calls later, and I'm sitting in Peter Green's chair at the dinner table, eating his food, enjoying his family.

"He's going to be big," Mr. Green says. "I haven't found a face like his in years."

Mrs. Green smiles and nods.

We eat in a strange silence for a while. Strange, because there are at least 10 bird cages in the room, holding at least 50 birds, and they're not saying a damn thing. I might assume they're fake, but they move their heads and side-step back and forth, quietly. The caged mammals which I noticed in the next room are also somehow mute.

"Did Peter like animals?" I say.

"Not really," Mrs. Green says, at almost a whisper. "They're mine."

"Oh."

"This eggplant is delicious," Mr. Green says.

Mrs. Green smiles, although Mr. Green isn't looking at her. He glances at his watch.

"You'll meet with Ladislav on Monday," Mr. Green says. "He's the photographer."

"Do I need to bring anything?" I say.

"No, no."

"I don't know how to pose." I've posed in front of the mirror with my gun a few times, but I don't suppose that counts.

"Don't worry," he says, and looks at his watch again. "You're going to be big."

**I'm** sitting on a stool, which I keep in the car with me these days, and I look up. I'm a cowboy on a billboard. I'm posing with tight jeans and a long, thick prop gun.

I don't smile exactly, but I feel like dancing.

I'm big.

**Mr.** Green's ass squeaks as he scoots closer to me on the leather couch. He rests his hand so that his pinky is touching mine. Just barely.

"Are you interested in big bucks?" he says.

"Of course," I say.

"Have you ever been with a man before?"

"No."

"I didn't think so." He grins and puts his hand on mine. "There have been offers from the top of the top. They trust me with their business. We're talking millions here, for both of us."

"That's a lot of money." Not that I need any more, but need has nothing to do with it.

"Do you have a problem with this?"

I don't mind compromising myself for a job, but I don't think this will work. My eyes tell him that.

He takes his hand off me. "What's wrong?"

"The thing is...I'm missing the head of my penis."

Mr. Green laughs. "That's not going to be a problem."

"Really?"

"You've got a lot to learn."

"I guess so."

"If we're going to do this, I need you to seal the deal." He undoes his belt and pulls down his pants. "Show me you're my fucking whore."

I do.

**Mrs.** Green tells me to come over. She says Mr. Green needs to see me right away. The sign on the door reads, "Come right in."

What I find is Mrs. Green spread-eagle on the couch with bright red birds clinging to her nipples by their beaks, and a monkey with its furry arm rammed deep into her vagina.

"Oh Brighton," she says, covering her face with her hands. "I'm so embarrassed."

I watch the monkey move his arm in and out, because I don't know what else to do.

"Please close the door," Mrs. Green says. "The animals will get out."

I do as I'm told. For the first time I notice the tarps on the floor. I notice that all the cages are open. I notice that there are animals all over the place. They're loud and wild. They're fighting and hissing and fucking.

"Would you like something to drink?" she says.

I nod, though I'm not particularly thirsty.

She taps the monkey on his head and he pulls his wet arm out of her. He sniffs at his fingers. Then she holds a cup between her legs. She pees.

"Thank you," I say, when she hands me the cup, though, I don't drink. Not at first anyway.

"You look an awful lot like him," she says.

"The monkey?"

"Peter." She picks up the potbelly pig resting beside her. I think she's going to cradle him like a baby, but she French kisses him instead. For a good three minutes. Afterward she says, "You're welcome to sleep in his bed. Peter's. The sheets are clean. I could read

you a story."

"I think I'd better go, Mrs. Green."

"That day, he told me he didn't want to go to school. He was feeling sick but I made him go anyway. I didn't want him here."

She hates herself.

That's what victims do.

"I killed your son," I want to say.

Instead, I look into her eyes.

**Eberhard** dies a death that makes even me sick to my stomach, and then nothing happens for two weeks.

No phone calls.

No assassin jobs.

No prostitution jobs.

Even Peter shuns me in my dreams.

Usually I revel in my time alone. I like cooking and gardening and reading. But that's only when I'm escaping from my daily demons.

For these fourteen days, I'm normal.

These are probably the worst two weeks of my adult life.

Finally, though, Mr. Green calls me.

They want me for dinner.

I'm saved.

**All** the animals are caged and silent again. I hate them for it. They should stop sitting on their asses and break free. They should tear me apart.

"This eggplant is delicious," Mr. Green says.

Mrs. Green smiles, although Mr. Green isn't looking at her. He glances at his watch.

"Your watch stopped yesterday," Mrs. Green says. "I saw it last night."

"You're right," Mr. Green says.

"Did you get the battery replaced since

then?”

“No.”

“Then why do you keep looking at it?”

He stares at the eggplant for a while, then looks at me, “I know you’re fucking my wife.”

“That’s not true, Mr. Green,” I say. “Really.”

“If you fucked me, then Brighton wouldn’t have to,” Mrs. Green says.

“Just because I won’t touch your filthy cunt doesn’t mean I want anyone else to!” Mr. Green says.

“Fuck you!” Mrs. Green screams.

Mr. Green growls and stands. “Fuck you!” He goes for the birds.

Mrs. Green shouts, “Stop it! Stop it!” while he systematically circumnavigates the room and wrings their little necks.

“Brighton!” she says, at last. “Stop him!”

When I stand, Mr. Green reaches behind his back and pulls out a long, thick gun. He points it at me. Then he rushes into the other room.

There are gunshots, followed by whimpers and cries and howls.

“Stop him!” Mrs. Green says.

She follows me into the next room, and she screams even louder when she sees the carnage. Already, the room smells like blood and fear.

I watch as Mr. Green shoots the monkey in the heart.

The little guy covers his face with his hands, and falls over limp.

“Stop him!” Mrs. Green says.

I could probably wrestle the gun out of Mr. Green’s hands, but that’s not the kind of person I am. I smash him over the head with their television instead. As hard as I can.

He falls over.

By the looks of him, he’s obviously gone. He’s only garbage now.

“You killed him,” Mrs. Green says. “You killed my fucking husband!”

She screams. She trusted me and I failed her.

She picks up Mr. Green’s long, thick gun and shoots my legs at least 10 times. When I’m lying face-down on the floor, she wraps her monkey around my neck and proceeds to strangle me with him.

I could let her get her revenge, but I’m not that kind of person either. I pull a switchblade out of my pocket. I manage to roll over and stab her in the neck. As deep as I can.

She sits on the couch and bleeds.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper.

But it’s too late.

I’ve been judged, and it won’t be the last time.

No one’s moving anymore except me and a hamster.

I take him out of his cage. I stare into his eyes.

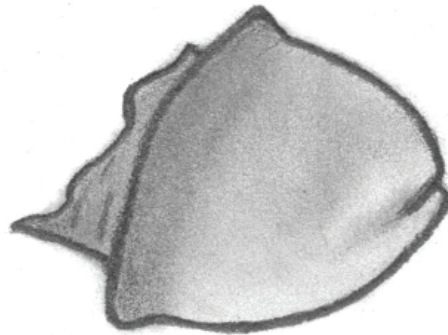
“Animal,” I say.

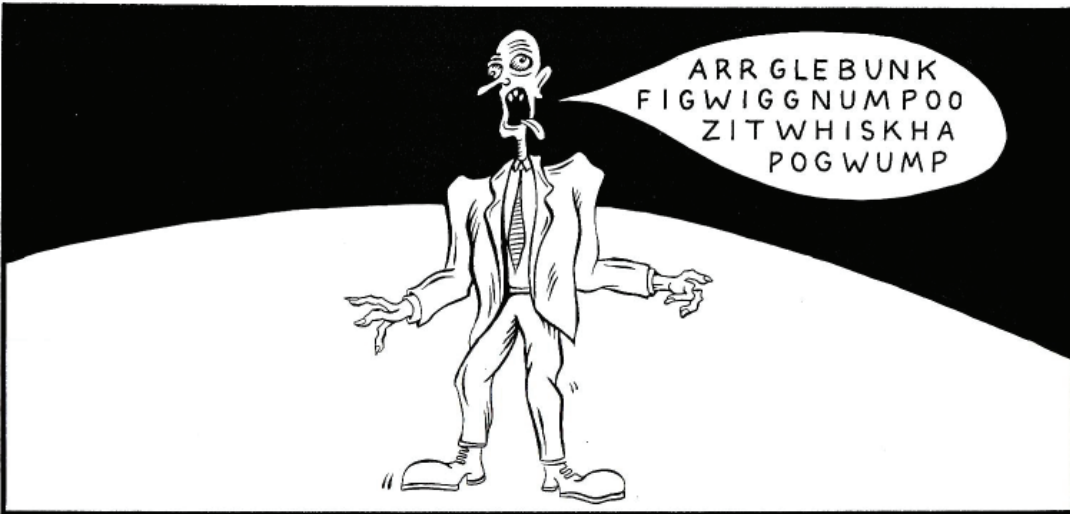
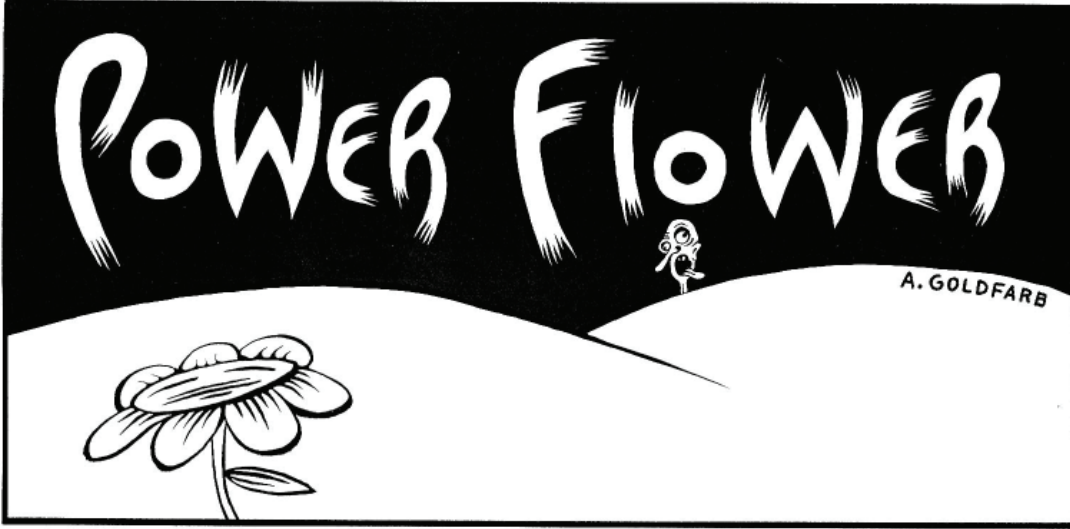
If he were stronger, or smarter, or luckier, maybe he could get out of this. As it is, he’s a fucking hamster, and it’s all his fault.

I consider tossing him out the window, but decide to blast his brains out instead.

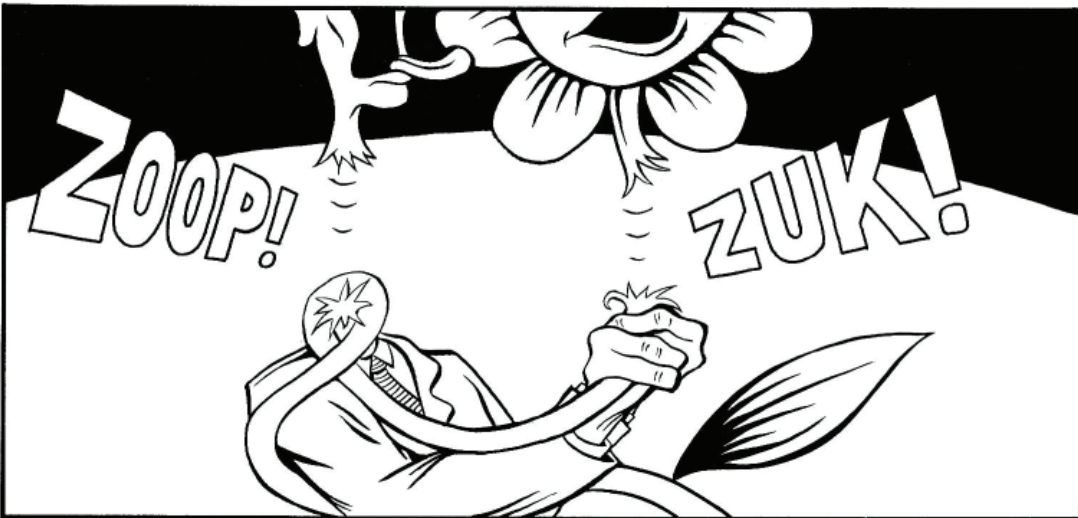
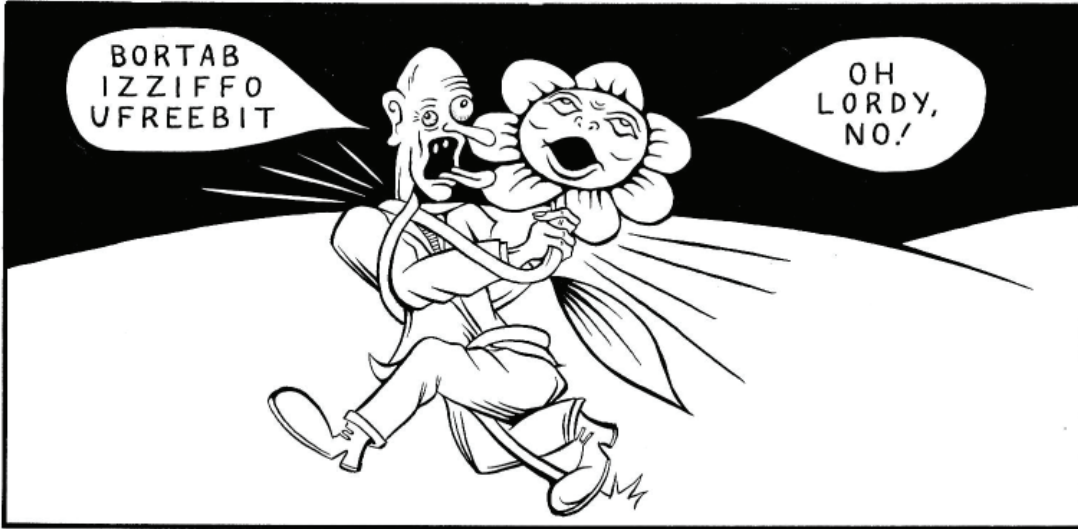
He dies.

That’s what victims do.













*Garrett Cook is the author of the Murderland series - a ten volume bizarro-pulp epic being released through Evil Nerd Empire. Cook's true claim to fame is winning the first ever Ultimate Bizarro Showdown at BizarroCon 2008. After only having been in the scene for a year, he put Bizarros that have been around since the beginning in their place over who was the weirdest of them all.*

*This story shows why Garrett Cook won the showdown. It is about a teddy bear detective in a world of Furrries. There is something seriously wrong with his head.*

## **Mr. Plush, Detective** *by Garrett Cook*

*(Author's Note: Mr. Plush Detective is a modified version of the fifth chapter of a popular detective serial I sold to Startling Adult Mysteries Magazine in the early fifties. Several slanderous statements against the Chinese have been removed and some slanderous statements against Furrries, who were the generation's equivalent of the Beatniks, have been added as it is now permissible to do so.)*

**Until** a month ago, my name was Hatbox. Then, I woke up as a teddy bear in a trench coat and fedora. I wasn't just a teddy bear, I was worse; I was a teddy bear and a lowdown dirty private dick, the kind of gumshoe you hire when you want somebody found and don't care if somebody else has gotta get lost. From a hearty six one, I went down to three feet high, all because I needed money and Plush needed to be somebody else. When you got money, you can be anybody, which was lucky for the no-good, cuddly brown bastard that double crossed me. Next time a teddy bear offers to pay off your gambling debts in exchange for your body, you'd better think twice. I sure as hell should have.

Had I thought twice and not ended up as Jimmy Plush, I wouldn't have been sneaking

into the warehouse where Lillian Benzedrine was being held. If I hadn't ended up as Jimmy Plush I wouldn't be padding around, palms frozen onto the oversized-trigger of a custom fingerless forty-five. Life is funny that way. Okay, so life is funny if you're the worst pulp writer on earth and don't have the foresight to think that life as a teddy bear would be perfectly peachy if I had my memories of my old life removed.

This was my eighth trip to warehouses like this in a month. Kidnappers are sloppy in this town. One look at the perpetrators said why. One of the two was a big guy, his face was clenched tight, his jaw square and he had a forehead you could serve a round of drinks for the house off. The other one looked like a ferret standin' on its hind legs, wore a long tie decorated with hearts. I knew them well by now, Halperin's men, Johnny Hideous and Skinny Valentine. Not much for brains or creativity, but I will admit that in the past they had been know to press their size advantage with some degree of effectiveness. In short, men who I'm embarrassed to say have literally knocked the stuffing out of me.

But, lucky for me, I've gotten used to this body (as much as a guy can get used to being a teddy bear the size of a toddler)

and being tiny and made out of plush and stuffing makes you quiet. Quiet enough to sneak up behind a huge bruiser and shoot out the back of his knee at point blank range with a modified teddy bear .45. Mean enough to do it, too. If this warehouse had neighbors, Hideous definitely would've woken them up.

"Jimmy Plush, I'll teach ya! I'll teach ya to sneak up behind me!"

He was right. His falling to the floor writhing and screaming definitely taught me that I should sneak up on him. His partner reached for his gun, but I was quicker on the draw and shot him in the hand. Last time I'd encountered these two a week back, I was the one getting shot in the arm, while Hideous reached into me and started pulling cotton out. This was definitely a change for the better. Tangle with a couple of thugs nine times you start to figure things out.

Angry and bleeding, but not down for the count, Skinny charged me and though he wasn't the stronger of the two I was still a teddy bear. I realized now would be the time to make use of some of the Chinese fighting arts that my chauffeur Chang was training me in, fighting arts used by the real Jimmy Plush to put thugs like these in their places. The Angry Hamster Kick was perfected by vicious Shaolin dwarves for just these occasions, and sure enough, one good quick Hamster Kick used Valentine's momentum and size to cave his ribs in on themselves.

Since the two thugs would be more eager to get to a hospital than finish me off, I untied Mrs. Benzadrine and brought her out to the limo for delivery to her husband, who had tried to open a competing Chinese restaurant across the street from Vic Halperin's gaudy Chinese pleasure palace, J.L. Wong's. Vic Halperin had never liked competition and David Benzadrine's mother was actually Chinese. As well as hating

competition, Halperin hated the Chinese since his greatest desire in life was to be one of them. I pitied Benzadrine, since inheriting this body left me on Halperin's bad side from day one, and like him there was nothing I could do about what body I inhabited. Unlike him, I owned a gun and was training in the Chinese fighting arts. For a race of wisecracking chauffeurs and crooked restaurateurs, those Chinese sure know their fighting arts.

I proudly brought Mrs. Benzadrine to the door and rang the bell. Nothing. Knocked. Nothing. Something stank. I worked the knob and it turned out the door was open.

"I'll go in first, Mrs. Benzadrine. I think something's going on."

My chauffeur rolled down his window, perfect to the beat. It was uncanny how he did that all the time.

"Should Chang accompany most honored Mr. Plush inside?"

"Stay out here and wait."

"As you wish. But Chang is not sure..."

"Wait outside and be ready if I don't come out."

"Yes, Mr. Plush." Chang mumbled what must have been something rude in Chinese. I'll have to learn to speak slanty someday and take him by surprise. Someday.

Chang was right. Chang has an awful habit of being right. I opened the door, walked into the sitting room and a walrus shot me in the chest. It was probably just a furry dressed as a walrus, but I still didn't expect to be shot in the chest by anything resembling a walrus. A squid, also definitely a furry, walked into the sitting room with a hand drill. Luckily, I black out from pain easily and am something of a fainter. Otherwise, I would have felt something nobody should ever feel.

When my eyes opened, I was disappointed but not surprised that the first thing I saw was the long, arrogant, wrinkly face of Vic Halperin, “the Pale Peril” as he’s often called. The squinty eyes, the long, skinny fake moustache, the awful goatee, the cheap fez on his head. Halperin was no easier to look at than he was to talk to. He ran his press-on nails over what I now understood to be a gaping hole in my stomach, proudly exploring its contours. I’m grateful that teddy bears don’t bleed or vomit, because otherwise I’d be doing plenty of both things. He backed off, so I could look at the two Furrries who knocked me out cold. And appreciate that Chang and the Benzadrines were all tied up beside me.

Chang’s head was hanging.

“Chang apologizes to honored Mr. Plush. There is no counter for squid style martial arts.”

“That’s alright, Chang,” I said, mortified that all my stuffing was hanging out, “the cotton comes out of your next check.”

Halperin cleared his throat and, as expected, began a lengthy reprimand in his deep voice. It was as far from being Chinese as he was, maybe more because it didn’t have a cheap kimono and a fez to hide behind.

“Jimmy Plush, we meet again, detective, but this time, the advantage is of course my own. I’m sure that you were finally able to put Skinny Valentine and Johnny Hideous in the hospital, but as you can see, I have taken a higher class of thug, men who can’t be outwitted by a two-bit stuffed bear who likes to stick his nose in the wrong honey pots.”

It took a lot of willpower not to laugh. I restrained myself not out of any kind of fear of Halperin, but out of knowledge that laughing would make more of my stuffing start to fall out.

“How do you know it was me?”

“Mr. Plush, you have a very familiar face.”

“Common too. You ever been to F.A.O Schwartz?”

Halperin liked to banter, but was always quick to get steamed. I wanted him to be off balance and give me some kind of advantage. It didn’t work.

“That’s very funny, Mr. Plush, but the fact is, something must be done about you.”

“Give him to me,” the walrus furry cooed, “he’s so beautiful, so soft. I could have so much fun with him...”

The squid crossed his arms.

“I don’t think he’s so special.” There was a hint of jealousy in his voice, but I didn’t want to think about it.

“We could both have him, and it would be a delight.”

“I suppose we could. He *is* beautiful.”

“His fur has a lovely texture...”

Now I was starting to get afraid. Halperin was the kind of scum that would hand me over to his gunsels to have god-knows-what done to me. He also appreciated these guys more than he did Hideous and Valentine, even though they’d only been in his service a little bit. I hoped I could either get out of here before they did or lose enough stuffing to die so I wouldn’t have to experience their plush flippers and tentacles on me.

“You see, Mr. Plush, what happens when you interfere with me? I’m sure you don’t want Tusky and Bernstein to have their way with you, do you?”

“I must confess I would not.” I tried to say it with my tough façade intact. I’m pretty sure I didn’t pull it off quite right.

“So stay out of my way, or you’ll be left to serve as a kind of toy which you were not intended to be.”

“All right. I’ll lay off your operation.”

Halperin applauded softly.

“Excellent, Mr. Plush. Tusky, Bernstein, untie Plush and my countryman.”

The walrus and squid complied.

“I hope to see you later,” the walrus whispered in my ear. I hoped I never would.

I eased into my modified limo feeling like I’d been hit by a truck full of lightning being driven by my girl and the man she was making time with.

“Chang,” I said to my chauffeur, “that was demoralizing.”

“I cannot apologize enough, most honored Mr. Plush.”

“Funny that you say that, Chang. *That* was just enough. Next time we go against Halperin, I hope there won’t be any squids involved,” I choked a little, “or walruses. God, I hope there aren’t any walruses.”

“The squid and walrus’ success means there will be more of them. Maybe the time has come that for once you keep your word and leave Halperin alone.”

I didn’t like hearing that, especially coming from a Chinaman who was working for me. Chang had a tendency to say the wrong thing, particularly when it was the right thing. One of the few joys in my life of teddy bear detective inadequacy was messing with Halperin, especially since I had just gotten an innocent man and his wife killed for opening a Chinese restaurant on the wrong side of town. On the other hand, next time we squared off, I’d have to face Halperin’s Furrries. I didn’t like losing and I didn’t like admitting that I couldn’t win. Chang had done something impressive: found a spot where I was even more vulnerable.

“It’s your fault I got in this mess, Chang. Don’t tell me whose cage I can rattle and whose I can’t! This little bear’s got teeth, Chang, and don’t you forget it.”

The argument ended abruptly when we both noticed the same thing: there were

more furry girls on the streets. Usually they were rare and hard to pick up, but now there were squirrel girls and skunk girls and kitty cat girls and even killer whale girls peddling their wares everywhere. First Halperin employs Furrries, now every pimp in the city must be doing it. Something didn’t add up.

“You remember there being so many Furrries in this town, Chang?”

“I can honestly say, Mr. Plush, that I do not. I have never seen two prostitutes dressed as turtles arguing over which lamppost to lean against in my life.”

“Smells like Halperin.”

Chang shot down my theory immediately.

“Mr. Halperin has been running the flesh trade in this city for years. Why would he just now put more furry girls on the streets, most honored Mr. Plush?”

“You’ve got a point Chang. Let’s go to Jean’s. There’s nobody else I know who can patch me up and tell me about Furrries in this town.”

“A most wise suggestion, most honored Mr. Plush.”

We drove to Jean’s. She answered the door in her evening clothes, somehow having figured I’d come by. Her evening clothes happen to be a tight, head to toe fox suit. Somehow she pulled it off. I never bought into that Indian shamanic totem stuff, but that suit made me wonder from time to time.

Being a teddy bear kind of blunts the impact of a near fatal wounding. Most guys show up with their guts hanging out, their girlfriend faints. Me? It’s always the same:

“What have you done this time? Let me get my sewing box...”

“Your compassion moves me to tears.”

“Your sarcasm bores me to tears. Come in and sit down on the bed.”

So I did and she began to sew. As you can imagine, it hurt like hell, but not so bad as a gutshot does.

“You should really stop messing with Halperin.”

And not as bad as a lecture either.

“The man’s a crook and a bully. He deserves the trouble I give him.”

Jean rubbed her nose against my forehead.

“But do you deserve the trouble he gives you, baby?”

Maybe if it wasn’t for the fact that Halperin was Jean’s employer I wouldn’t be so scornful of him. Then again, it was money I owed him that made me sell my body to Jimmy Plush. It was between how he helped me end up as a teddy bear and how he was party to Jean leading her secret life of waitressing and crime and how he helped her make a fool out of me on account of it. I was no fool, but Halperin helped her think she could make a fool out of

me and that was enough to make me hate him all over again for who he was. I might have actually started to like this girl if I could trust her and I wanted to like her so much.

“No matter what happens to me, Vic Halperin gets no quarter.”

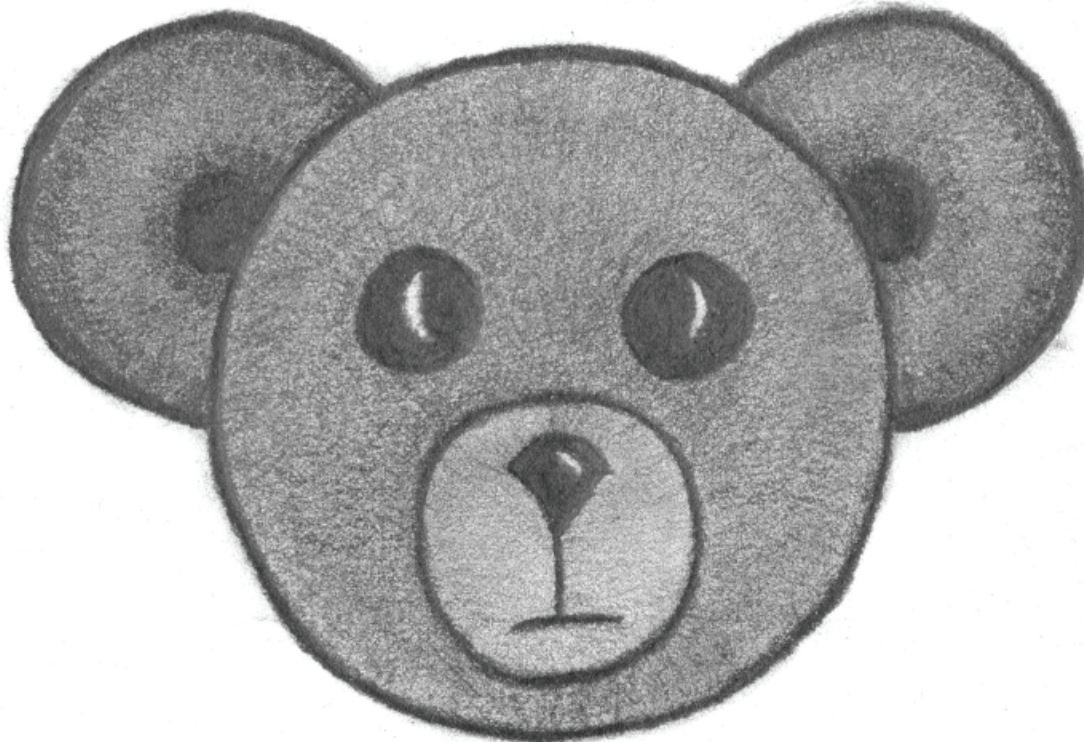
“You shouldn’t talk like that, Jimmy; Halperin’s a big, dangerous man in this town!”

“And I’m a small, dangerous bear, Jean! I’m not gonna be scared of anybody, you hear me?”

Sure I meant it, sure the bravado was real, but it was still a bit much. Being three feet tall and having no penis makes a man want to overcompensate. Dripping cotton from a gaping chest wound makes a man angry. In the future I would have to remind myself that my tough guy private dick outburst count was getting to be a bit high.

“I’ve got to go.”

I mustered the best sad teddy face I could. I was a pretty sad teddy.



“You sure?”

I was hoping this might go where it usually went when I was getting patched up. I lack equipment, but Jean rubs me against all the right places and it feels nice. I could use a rub against all those places, because believe me, they could be oh so right and my day had gone oh so wrong.

“I’ve got things to do.”

I knew what she meant. Waiting tables to help Halperin run numbers, unloading crates of fake name brand cereal, plucking balls of opium so that the poor sods at the den hidden behind J.L Wong’s were shortchanged. Things to do. Bad things to do. I was gonna find out what and break my word to Halperin as I always did, possibly getting the ever-loving shit beaten out of me like I usually did. Didn’t matter. I was tired of this.

“Alright. Dinner Friday?”

“Maybe. I might be busy.”

“Suit yourself. No fuzz off my balls. Thanks for the patchjob.”

“Any time.”

“Yeah sure, any time.”

I sulked my way out to the car and sat down.

“Chang...”

“Conceal the car, wait for Jean and follow her?”

“Yes, Chang. Do we do this that often?”

Chang didn’t answer. He knew he was already on pretty thin ice thanks to the incident with Tusky and Bernstein. We waited and a car picked her up. It drove around in circles for awhile to avoid a tail, not knowing Chang’s Chinese Shadow Driving skills would be more than enough to follow them. Shadow Driving was a recent addition to the Chinese Fighting Arts, but

not an altogether unwelcome one. The car stopped and let her out. I didn’t like what I saw.

Jean immediately began a brutal slap fight with a fat girl dressed like a squirrel for the use of her lamppost. In this city, a girl doesn’t use a lamppost for reading light.

“So there you go, Chang,” I boasted, “definitive proof.”

“That your girlfriend is a prostitute?”

“I’m trying to objectively appraise the situation, Chang. Thinking about that too much will inhibit me. Jean works for Halperin, though. The Furies are on the street, one furry works for Halperin, therefore the Furies are Halperin’s.”

“I am still not convinced.”

“Is there anybody else who might know something then, Chang?”

Chang’s voice got more solemn than usual.

“Yes, most honored Mr. Plush, but he hates you.”

“Doesn’t everybody?” I didn’t like the notion, but its veracity could hardly be disputed.

“Alright, Mr. Plush. Just don’t expect him to cooperate much. Also, I must warn you, Mittens O’ Hara, is unusual.”

“Nothing’s going to surprise me in this town.”

Except, that is, for an office dominated by a large typewriter. And a fat tiger cat whose porkpie hat rested uncomfortably atop its fat head. There was a slip of paper that read “press” on it. The cat sat down on various keys to type out something in enormous letters. It was a surprise, though I’ve gotta say, I had thought Halperin was the last animal left in this town. As soon as it spotted me, it hissed.

“Beat it, Plush,” said the cat in a high nasal New York huckster voice, “you know you ain’t welcome here, not after what you did!”

“I’m afraid I don’t know that I ain’t welcome, Mittens. Otherwise I wouldn’t be here.”

“Well now you know, Paddington, so scram!”

I decided to ease up on the tough guy detective stuff for a second. This guy was every bit as abrasive as I was and there’d be no sense starting anything. My temper hadn’t done me a whole hell of a lot of good lately.

“Listen, Mittens, I’ve got a big problem and I need your help. If you can’t help me out this city’s gonna get filthier and stay filthier. There’s a rumor going around that somebody’s helping Vic Halperin from the shadows. Somebody with Furry connections. You don’t wanna mess with angry Furies and how long do you think it will be before you starting poking around and get caught by a better class of thug than Johnny Hideous and Skinny Valentine? Think about it, kitty cat!”

The cat did think about it, writing several lines of Q’s as he sank down into his spot.

“As much as I and anybody else in this town who’s smart enough to count to three, I’ve gotta say, you have a point Plush. Guy like me gets into trouble all the time. Lots of tight squeezes, danger around every street corner. One day, Mr. Bartender starts slippin’ fellas gin with a knockout drop chaser and then, bang I’m on the trail and they’re on my tail. Dangerous work, Plush. So, I tell ya what, I’ll give you the lowdown on the Furies in town, even though I don’t like ya, and I want it to be known again, I

don’t like ya. You’re a walking cold sore, Jimmy Plush and you make people regret ever knowin’ ya. If I hadn’t lost my body in a game of checkers with a cat, I’d have shot you by now, but I’m glad I didn’t, because more Furies ain’t good for anybody, more Furies always mean more trouble, don’t they, Plush? So I’ll tell ya, I’ll...”

The cat went silent and fell from his spot on the typewriter. Reacting quickly, I reached for my gun, realizing somebody had come in while the cat was ranting, took aim and shot him and that somebody now had to be on the run. I could see the culprit running for the door, a guy in a penguin suit. Hopefully, all that padding wouldn’t protect the back of his knees.

It didn’t. He fell down right away, and it would be hard for him to get up. Particularly if I stood on his spine and pistol-whipped him in the back of his furry penguin head three or four times. Which I did. And he didn’t get up. I ordered Chang inside and the two of us retrieved Mittens and the penguin thug. The thug went in the trunk and Mittens got the back seat next to him. Only difference was Mittens was going to the hospital and the penguin thug was definitely not.

“When you drop off Mittens, take me to Jean’s, Chang.”

“Certainly, most honored Jimmy Plush, but I don’t think she’ll be home.”

“That’s the point. She’s got sewing needles and a bag of cotton.”

Chang trembled a bit.

“You’re starting to sound like the real Jimmy Plush.”

“What was that?” the groggy, wounded Mittens mumbled, revealing that he might just pull through.

“I’ll explain another day.”



“Savin’ my life almost makes up for what you did to me,” said the cat, “almost.”

So we brought the cat to the hospital. I couldn’t stick around to find out if he’d pull through because I had some business with the guy who shot him. Some very unpleasant business. We dragged him into Jean’s house and tied him to a chair in her kitchen. I climbed onto the counter and grabbed a sharp knife, while Chang peeled the penguin suit off the hood. Underneath it, he was even less to look at. I could see why he wanted so much to be cute.

His eyes opened to find me standing on the table brandishing a kitchen knife. I had also lain out the bag of cotton and Jean’s sewing kit.

“I need some information,” I said matter-of-factly.

“I don’t know nothin’!”

“Aww, I wouldn’t say that. You know how to shoot a cat. You also know that an orange beak is better than that ugly, scrunched up pug nose of yours. That’s not nothin’. I know lots of people who know less than that.”

The penguin thug spat at me.

“I’m not tellin’ you nothin’!”

“See? There we go. Now we’re communicating better. There’s a difference between the two things?”

“Yeah? What it is, bear?”

“If you don’t know nothin’, I could torture you all day and nothing would come out. But, if you just won’t tell me anything then I could probably extract something.”

The penguin thug coughed out a nervous fake laugh.

“Ha! That’s rich comin’ from the teddy bear. You ain’t got the balls!”

I’m not certain if I had ever intended for this to be a bluff, but if I had, that possibility

was gone now. As any man would be who lacked genitalia, I was awfully sensitive. I grabbed the knife with both hands and, with all my teddy bear strength, I made a long cut in his bare chest.

“You Furrries. You make me laugh. Walkin’ around, pretending to be what I am. It’s insulting. It’s hilarious, too. I’m gonna give you what you want. Chang, stuff ‘im.”

My chauffeur’s yellow skin turned pale.

“Mr. Plush...”

“Take the cotton and stick it in the hole, Chang. Then sew it.”

The penguin thug’s eyes widened. They must have looked enormous to Chang.

“Please, mister, you can’t...”

Chang gave his customary bow.

“As you wish, most honored Mister Plush.”

So, Chang stuffed the wound with cotton and sewed it shut. The penguin thug made several noises I never expected to hear out of a man or a penguin. I glared at him with my round, black plastic eyes. I knew he couldn’t see any expression behind them, but from the look on his tear-stained face, I could tell that he knew I was glaring and he knew I wasn’t above cutting him again.

“I do know somethin’ and I’ll tell ya.”

“You don’t say? I’m glad, because Chang could easily undo all those stitches one by one...”

“Halperin’s working with a man from outta town who just started coming around. He knew this town was ripe for plucking. Halperin could be scared, could be shaken down. Halperin’s a coward underneath the whole Mandarin act.”

“Tell me something I don’t know. And I mean that literally. Stop stalling. I am not a patient little bear.”

“His name’s Kewpie Doll Steve.”

“Better. If he were in the phonebook, that is. Chang, undo the stitches.”

Chang once more gave his customary bow. He elongated it, seeing that this time I actually was bluffing.

“Wait...you don’t gotta do that. The Monogram Marshmallow factory’s a front for his hideout.”

Great. Kewpie Doll Steve was hanging out at the Monogram Marshmallow factory. The worst part of having lost my memory is having to rediscover what a stupid town I lived in one day at a time. There were towns where it was hard to solve a mystery, where it took a smart man and not a guy willing to torture idiot henchmen for answers. There were towns where furry prostitution wasn’t a criminal calling. There were towns outside the protectorate of crotchety teddy bears. Somehow, I still felt attached to this one and it bugged the hell out of me.

I juggled my failures in my head like so many oranges; I had failed as a writer and failed as a gambler, so I failed as a person and traded bodies with Jimmy Plush, I had failed as a man not convincing my girl to get out of Halperin’s press-on nailed grasp, I had failed as a detective when I got knocked out and left Lillian Benzadrine to Halperin’s very limited mercies. She was probably somewhere dressed up as a French poodle to amuse out-of-town businessmen as her husband dangled in a chair over a vat of acid. My conscience was in the same position and there were scissors at the rope. Snip. Splash. Stab. I plunged the knife deep, penetrating his heart as all the disappointments had mine.

I waited for Chang’s reaction. I wanted him to shake his head in

disappointment. I wanted him to cry or tell me I’d gone too far and he should’ve been spared since he gave me the information he needed. But Chang had worked for the real Jimmy Plush, who had done things Chang refused to tell me about, who had done things that made Chang grateful for me, as bitter as I could get and as sick as could be of his small outbursts of impertinence in the midst of fawning loyalty. Chang wasn’t surprised.

“Your orders, Mister Plush?”

I sighed.

“Finish the job, Chang. We need to send a message; we need Halperin to know that Jimmy Plush is no fool, no weakling and isn’t going to be pushed around.”

So Chang and I got to it. It took hours, stank like nothin’ else I’ve ever smelled and we had to buy a lot more cotton and give Jean’s kitchen quite the scrubbing, but it was worth it. Halperin would get the message now, and I wouldn’t have to do this again. Hopefully. I can’t say I was that crazy about the whole experience. We dropped off the corpse outside J.L. Wong’s and drove like the wind for the Monogram Marshmallow factory, where Kewpie Doll Steve or somebody who knew where he was should have been.

I can’t say I was at all shocked to find “Halperin’s” gunsels Tusky and Bernstein guarding the back door. Might be a big city, but it was a pretty damn small world. Much as I wanted a piece of that walrus, stuffing that penguin had slightly eased my thirst for revenge, and I was thinking clearer.

“Chang, you take down the walrus, I’ll take the squid.”

Chang was concerned.

“You realize there is no counter to squid style martial arts.”

"I do, Chang."

"And you are angry at the walrus..."

"Don't worry about me, Chang. I'm sure it will all work out."

I sprang from the car and put a bullet right between Bernstein's eyes. There was no counter to squid style martial arts, but as of yet the Chinese really hadn't come up with a way to get around being shot in the head. Having untied the Gordian Knot with my gun, Chang readied himself for the walrus' charge. Tusky could have countered the Chinese fighting arts as well, but was, as I suspected, blinded with grief and anger at the death of his lover.

Poor Tusky charged directly into a move whose name Chang says translates roughly into "Gilded Battle Axe Fist." The walrus vomited out a big fishy mess and then imploded. Made me wonder why Chang had never chosen to do that before. It would have made things much easier.

Of course, it wasn't *that* easy. The ruckus of the exploding walrus and the vanquished squid attracted some attention. Plenty of attention. The door burst open and there were all manner of Furies on the other side of it, from neon yellow opossums, to perpetually smiling wolves, from angry rattlers to loveable mandrills to cartoonish chipmunks to placid, Zen tortoises. There were some fifty of them pouring out of there, but we were ready to make some fur fly.

High on our victory, we took them three, four at a time; me letting bullets fly, tripping up a pink cow with a low kick as I shot a badger in the eye. With the Gilded Battle Axe Fist and the Decapitation Kick, Chang went through a pair of cuddly coyotes without blinking an eye and then brought the fear of God into a young tortoise that fled surprisingly fast. I took a few punches,

dodged a few bullets, but I gave better than I got, because I'm Jimmy Plush and there ain't no walking stuffed animal in this town, real or fake, that can stand up to me when I'm angry and I've just put a bullet in the head of somebody who I thought was unbeatable. Plush heads and the real heads underneath them littered the alley outside the Monogram Marshmallow Factory. There's nothing like the scent of fake fur, hot lead and spilled guts in the night to prove you're a real man.

"Chang, you've redeemed yourself," I said to the chauffeur, "but I need you to stay in the car."

"Mr. Plush, who knows what kind of ambush..."

"I think the ambush is over. I'm going in to investigate and hopefully find Kewpie Doll Steve."

"As you wish, most honored Mr. Plush."

Like I said, in some towns mysteries are tough to solve and it takes a real smart man to unravel it all but this ain't one of the towns. Criminals, God bless 'em, were usually found exactly where you expected to find them, completely unafraid of being undermined by the likes of myself or the frequently absent police department. Emerging from the shadows, walking past two large inflatable sculptures of Murray, the Monogram Unicorn, was a figure about my size.

As he stepped into the light, I saw how eerily Kewpie Doll Steve looked like a she. Like my own empty plastic eyes, his showed no feeling, but looked a bit flirty on account of the long, curled eyelashes and nonexistent eyebrows. His huge, infant lips had been painted red, which was the color of the short, checkered dress he wore. The ensemble was completed by a pair of little

white party shoes. The illusion broke when he laughed a heavy cigarburned laugh.

“This is him? The guy who brought down my men? Who gives Vic Halperin trouble? You’re a riot, Jimmy Plush. You’re just as much of a joke as me!”

I squeezed off a shot at the doll but, now of all times, the gun clicked. “Sorry, out of ammo”.

“Don’t worry, Plush. I don’t have a gun. Don’t need one either, teddy bear!”

The talking doll was quick and caught me off guard, he leapt like a jaguar, pinning me to the ground and punching me hard in the face. A guy like this was strong for the same reason I had to be strong: cause he looked nothing like a man. Cause he looked soft. As the punches rained down like brokers when the market goes south, I understood more than ever why I was so angry. I rolled him off me and took his position on top.

His head squeaked with each of my blows, which left me wondering just what could be done to a guy like this. Could he be brain damaged? Could he be unstuffed? Not by a guy with no hands who doesn’t have anything to cut him with. I was out of bullets, too. I’d have to do something the criminals in this town usually didn’t require me to do and that was think. I got off him and danced around like a boxer, putting up my knuckleless dukes.

Kewpie Doll Steve kicked surprisingly hard again, sending me flying backwards into the side of a marshmallow vat. It was hot. I moved away from it quickly, knowing my own flammability a bit too well thanks to a run-in with Skinny Valentine and a cigarette lighter a few weeks back. I scurried lightly up the ladder leading up to the vat, hoping Kewpie Doll Steve might be dumb enough to follow. Naturally, he took the bait.

I scrambled up the ladder one step at a time, defending my position with punch after punch and from punch after punch. Every couple of hits, I would be nearly as oblivious as he was or lose my footing on the ladder, but then the plan would come back to me, along with the knowledge that there would be no other way to bring this guy down. Pathetic that I had to rely on a vat of hot marshmallows.

We reached the top and I shuffled along the rim, balance aided by my relative lack of mass, his balance aided by the same. I risked my position to rush him and nearly fell in myself. Like Holmes and Moriarty, we were caught up in a moment of mortal struggle and almost plunged to the death together. Almost. My hands found the rim as he fell screaming into the white, hot gooey abyss. Awful way to go. I shuffled along the rim again until I reached the ladder and worked my way down to enjoy my moment of triumph.

I should have known I was never that lucky. When I hit the ground, a bullet caught me in the back, bringing me down. I felt my consciousness start to puff out my body like a wisp of smoke. I wish I wasn’t a guy who fainted so easily. The trenchcoated assassin left his hiding place and climbed gracefully up the ladder, reaching in, grabbing the marshmallow covered Kewpie Doll Steve from the pit of ooze and climbing down just as quickly as he climbed up. Before blacking out completely I caught a glimpse of the guy’s face. Just when I thought my day had gotten better, it went back to being a regular god-awful day in the life of Jimmy Plush, teddy bear detective. The face had been my own only a month back, the face of one Charles Hatbox, but behind the eyes there was the bear with whom I’d traded bodies, that bastard, the real Jimmy Plush.

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# Punk Rock and Mother Punching: Author Spotlight on Gina Ranalli *by Jeff Burk*

Gina Ranalli has been a bizarro figurehead since the very beginning of the movement. Many bizarro fans were first introduced to her work through the novella, *Suicide Girls in the Afterlife*, in the first Bizarro Starter Kit. The tale of irreverent teens in an afterlife hotel was sharply written, accessible, and, most importantly, fun.

After working for years in semi-obscure, Ranalli has been earning a cult following of horror fans who are bored with the same old cookie-cutter storylines. Her

tales are like fresh, putrid air laced with shroom spores when compared to the rest of the genre scene. As more readers become exposed to her weird world, expect her profile to grow. With books coming out on four different publishers this year, there will be no reason for any genre fan to not be aware of her.

Socially and politically aware, her tales frequently deal with the breakdown of authoritative institutions. But don't expect a dry and boring sermon from her. This is punk rock anarchism with heavy doses of Tim Burton-esque surrealism and darkness.

Not only is she an awesomely talented writer but she is also a hell of a lot of fun to hang out with. While you may not find her doing readings too often, she can always be found leading a gang of drunken people towards some absurd goal (one New Years Eve with her almost ended with a cat-knapping).

Interestingly, Ranalli got her start by writing erotic fiction. She expresses that she was not very good at the genre but editors seemed to like what she wrote. She credits that time period with teaching her "about writing to what an editor wants." Though it did provide valuable writing experience she was eager to leave the scene and wrote other forms of fiction. "I think the only way it



might influence what I do now is that you're unlikely to find any graphic sex scenes in my stuff. If I never write another sex scene, it'll be too soon."

She did not find bizarro right away but she did have a desire to write weirder fiction. "My natural inclination was towards weird, funny fiction and I was kind of at sea as to where I could publish that kind of stuff. I wasn't having any luck submitting it to places that had been publishing my other work. I kept trying to weave bizarre humor into my erotica, but that shit wasn't flying at all." One has to wonder what those stories may have been like.

After coming across Carlton Mellick III on an internet message board, she knew she had found a writing scene of likeminded freaks. "I bought, I think it was *Razor Wire Pubic Hair*, and was sold. I just fell in love with his writing and wrote to him about it. He was very receptive to helping out a fellow author and I went down to Portland to have a beer and talk to him about writing. We ended up talking and drinking for 9 hours straight. It was amazing. He was hugely encouraging, told me pretty much everything I need to know and I've never looked back. I really owe him everything. I think most of us do."

Her first published book was *Chemical Gardens* released through Afterbirth Books in 2006. It is a retelling of *The Wizard of Oz*, but starring a crew of punk-rockers rather than the wholesome Dorothy we are all familiar with.

Ranalli's goal for the book was to put her own twisted spin on the story. A long time fan of the original film, she says, "I still don't think there's been a better witch put on celluloid. She's perfect. But the older I got, the more annoying the main characters

were to me. I kept thinking, wouldn't it be funny if something really awful happened to them? I was a pretty demented kid, I guess. So, I just wanted to give it my own flavor, my own humor."

*Chemical Gardens* also shows Ranalli's love of classic film. Something that has been a major influence on her work and "can probably be found in all of my longer work if you're really looking for it."

"I've always been inspired more by old movies than new ones. As a kid, I was in love with the screwball comedies of the 1930's and 40's. Anything with Katharine Hepburn. I don't even know what the other kids were watching back then. I was in my own little black and white world. *Bringing Up Baby*. *Holiday*. *The Philadelphia Story*.



Stuff like that. They were my life's blood. I guess you could say I was an odd duck even then. Not much has changed either. I still love 'em."

In 2007, Ranalli co-authored *13 Thorns* with outsider artist Gus Fink. This would prove to be the book that would earn Ranalli the most followers and even the first Wonderland Award for best collection in 2008. A very dark and very strange collection of thirteen horror tales, the stories were written with Fink coming up with the original idea and then sending it to Ranalli for expansion.

"The way it worked was that Gus would send me an idea for a story, oftentimes it even had a title. Sometimes the ideas were really short. I think *Castle Girl* was literally just a few sentences. But the longer stories—*Deth Pitt*, *The Black Seeds*, *Life is Perfect*—had very detailed outlines. My job was to put flesh on the skeletons."

She says of the project, "I'd been a fan of Gus's art for several years, since 2001, I believe, though I didn't start

collecting his stuff until '03. Back then, he was selling his stuff on eBay and with every piece he would tell a little story. Usually only a few sentences, but they were very imaginative and intriguing to me. Sometimes I would buy something just because I liked the story so much.

"Anyway, he eventually came out to Washington for a solo art show and I went down to meet him. We got to talking and I brought up that I was a writer and how much I'd love for him to do cover art for one of my books sometime. He agreed and I sent him *Chemical Gardens* and a few ideas I had for art. I still feel very blessed to have that piece on the cover.

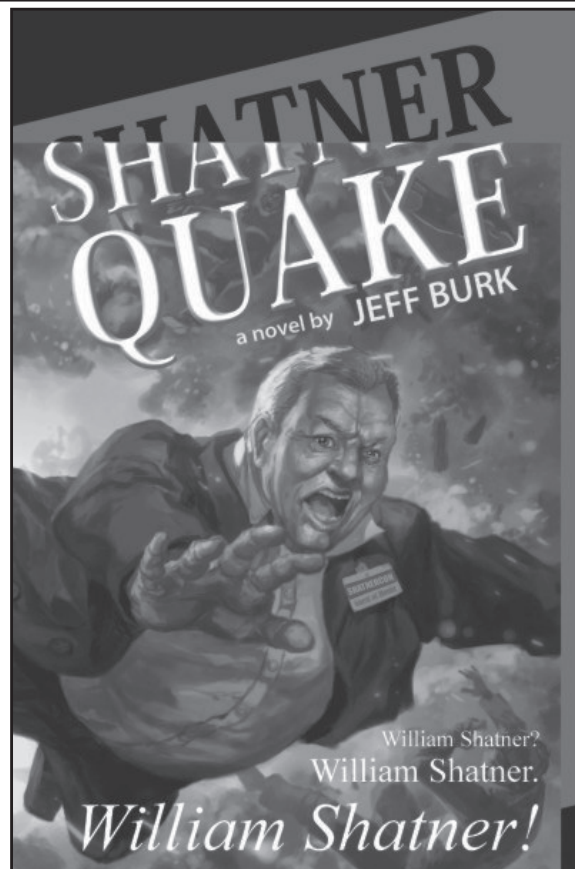
"One thing led to another and then we were talking about collaborating on a novel. That didn't work out, but we hit on the idea of a collection instead. It was a hard project, but I'm pretty pleased with the results and I think he is too."

*13 Thorns* also marks a shift in Ranalli's storytelling style. Her first two books were cheerfully nihilistic punk-rock



Gina Ranalli (second from Left) with her G-Force 13 Posse providing backup, accepts the Wonderland Award for Best Collection.





**“If the world ends tomorrow... anyone who has read Shatnerquake could die smiling, with extra wood (if male) or a lovely wide-on (if lady). It’s that good.”**

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[www.literarystrangedigest.blogspot.com](http://www.literarystrangedigest.blogspot.com)**

adventures. Now her writing took on a much darker tone with the focus shifting to issues of political and social relevance. She says this change “wasn’t really a conscious decision. It just sort of happened that way. And I never set out to write anything political or statements on society or that kind of thing. I always start with a premise that I think is weird and amusing and it just evolves from there.”

The first in these more serious works was *Wall of Kiss*, a disturbing tale of a woman who falls in love with a wall in her living room. The story explores many of the stereotype roles of romantic relationships and how they can lead to personal destruction for all parties involved.

Ranalli cautions not to take the story too seriously. “In all honesty, I just thought the idea was funny. It seemed so absurd that I couldn’t resist writing it down. It wasn’t until I was actually working on it that I realized I was making an observation of real relationships. When you look at it from that perspective, it is a pretty sad story, I guess. But I still see the humor in it and hope that others do too. That’s the main thing for me and I don’t want the weird, funny part of the story to be lost in the seriousness of it. I view it as a dark comedic love story.”

*Wall of Kiss* is also the first appearance of one of Ranalli’s favorite targets, the nuclear family. One of the pervading themes of her recent work is how social systems set up to protect the individual (i.e. family and government) instead suffocate and destroy the individual.

Ranalli says of her social consciousness, “You know, it’s not something I ever dwell on in real life anymore, but obviously

it has come out in my work. I’m one of those people who were failed by the whole “nuclear family” myth. Just because two people stay married to each other and don’t beat their kids out in public, doesn’t mean they’re living the good life behind closed doors. My upbringing was very fucked-up and I guess it’s inevitable that some of that will find its way into the fiction, but it’s never a conscious decision to write about it. I’d like to think it’s behind me and it won’t pop up in the stories anymore, but I guess you never know for sure.”

Her next work, *Mother Puncher*, was a further exploration of this idea. On this outing, the government is getting in on the oppression game. Overpopulation has become a serious issue in the world and to combat it there are “mother punchers.” Their job is to hit a mother, and if the father is around, him too, immediately after giving birth.

Even Ranalli found this set-up to be shocking, “The initial premise was funny to me, but also kind of made me wince too. As I was writing it, I kept thinking, ‘man, this is really sick’. But I was also snickering a bit, so I think that probably says quite a bit about my sense of humor, which can be pretty dark sometimes.”

Her latest work, *Sky Tongues* released through Eraserhead Press, continues on this deconstruction of family values. The book is presented as “the True Hollywood Story of mue [a term in the book for people born with radical physical alterations] celebrity, Sky Tongues, the biracial hermaphrodite with tongues for fingers.” The villains of the book are Sky Tongues’ jealous family who will stop at nothing to destroy Sky’s happiness.

## Bizarro Fiction

This may be the last time we see Ranalli working with these themes (at least for the foreseeable future). Her next book to be released will be *Swarm of Flying Eyeballs*, which Ranalli describes as “a love letter to 50’s b-flicks, a la The Blob. Those movies are so bad and so fun. It involves a group of summer school kids out to pick blueberries and encountering something very different. It’s pretty much classic weird monster stuff until the end, which is very bizarro.”

Then there is the start of a three book deal with Coscom Entertainment, which will be Ranalli doing her versions of archetypal monsters (the first book to be released will be a zombie story!). Later this year, Cargo Cult Press will release *House of Fallen Trees*, which is being described as a unique take on the classic ghost story. These releases will see Ranalli expanding into the small press and mainstream horror scenes, where her unique approach to dark fiction is sure to register with a legion of new fans.

Having been around since the days of hand-stapled, photocopied chapbooks, what does Gina Ranalli think of the future of bizarro?

“For bizarro, the sky’s the limit. It’s only going to grow and gain more readers and writers, which is such an amazing thing. People are craving something new and different and we’re here to give it to them. Being in the center of it, while it happens, is a phenomenal thing. It’s like that expression “It takes a village,” only our baby is this weird, demented creature that plants mind bombs and giggles as they explode, infecting yet another person. I really love our fucked up little baby.”

## Books by Gina Ranalli

Chemical Gardens - 2006  
Suicide Girls in the Afterlife - 2006  
13 Thorns (with Gus Fink) - 2007  
Wall of Kiss - 2007  
Mother Puncher - 2008  
Skin Flowers - 2008  
Sky Tongues - 2009  
Swarm of Flying Eyeballs - 2009  
House of Fallen Trees - 2009  
Still Life with Vibrator - TBA



*In late 2008, author Mykle Hansen embarked on an independent reading tour of the west coast. What he lacked in funds, he made up for in creativity. He reports:*

## **My Bear Will Kick Your Ass** **Reflections on Bizarro Book Promotion** *by Famous Author Mykle Hansen*

### **ONE: GREETINGS FROM ALL OVER**

#### **ASHLAND, OREGON**

Last show of the second leg. Tonight we are giving a lecture about the nuances of the bear-human relationship in a satanic-themed heavy metal bar. Steel-belted headbangers mill about impatiently at the taps, while in the green room I zip up Chet in his sweltering furry bear suit, and strap the ice packs to his head that will make it possible for him to act like a grizzly for forty five minutes under hot stage lights without collapsing.

Chet is my dear friend, but after two weeks of constant driving and close contact we've begun to hate each other. His job, as bear, is to pounce, wrestle me to the floor, rip my guts out and eat me — without breaking any of my bones, ideally. Tonight is the last night of the book tour, my voice is going, his patience is shot, I'm bruised all over from a week of this treatment, and we've both been drinking. I have four shots of whiskey lined up on my speaker's podium, and the bear has a bucket of Budweisers on ice. Outside is a room full of rowdy metalheads waiting for us to teach them about bears on a Friday night.

Why are we here? Why not someplace more bookish? Like, say, a

bookstore? Or a library, or a college campus? The screen-saver on the iMac in this green room plays a slideshow of pentagrams and goat vivisection. The slogan DEATH OR GLORY is embedded in the bar in gothic script. Human skulls festoon the venue like so many Christmas tree ornaments. Do these people buy books? Do metalheads read? I somehow imagined they dueled with Klingon battle axes instead, or drove tanks, or ate children.

DEATH OR GLORY! Okay, I can support that. We get the bear zipped up in his suit, we high-five in the traditional fashion, and I head to the stage in my famous author suit. I introduce myself, Famous Author Mykle Hansen, and call for my trained bear Chewie. The bear is prodded reluctantly onstage with traffic cones. The crowd goes nuts! There's something about a man in uniform... I drink my first shot of whiskey and we begin.

### **TWO: WHITHER THE MICROBES?**

We are so small, we members of the independent alternative press. We are like the lice that live on the hair of ants. We are dust. A single Barnes & Noble location, tossing and turning in its sleep, could accidentally crush our entire movement. We are microscopic and lonely.

But authors on the so-called Mainstream Presses are lonely too. I've heard the same story in many versions: Congratulations, you got a book deal! Maybe an advance even, some money to pay off your credit card bills or get your teeth fixed. But when it came time to sell your dreamchild book to the world, the marketing department was too busy trying to move Harry Potter clones and sell film rights. They told you to travel around the country all year, signing books for tiny groups of dubious readers in funny-smelling malls. But when you got to the funny-smelling mall, no dubious readers noticed you. Sales disappointed, while the whole company poured all its resources into CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE YOGA AND PILATES SOUL. Now they're taking their sweet time getting back to you about your second book, the one you're not allowed to sell to any other press. Welcome to the big time!

When I signed with Eraserhead Press to publish my novel *Help! A Bear is Eating Me!* I had no illusions that my publishers were brunching with Oprah or hot-tubbing with Ron Howard. I knew I'd have no budget for promotion but my own shallow pockets. But at least I had the moral support and organizational assistance of some people I know and trust, who live in my town and drink the same Kool-Aid I drink. We're bacteria on the ass of publishing, but at least we're a colony of bacteria. At least we're not alone.

So we had this book. Obviously — to me, at least — it was the greatest work of English Literature since Jonathan Livingston Seagull. But how to get anybody to buy a copy? This was my second book; my first book I not only self-published, I actually hot-glued the covers on in my basement, and made my daughter apply the UPC labels. A cottage industry, that first book. I never really marketed it other than through one local bookstore and

the the word of mouth of my friends, and their friends, and, eventually, some fans. Now I had a new book, my first new book in ages, and I needed to do better. I do still maintain this foolish fantasy of being able to make money at writing this bullshit, instead of crawling back into the mines every time the food runs low. For that to happen, I need to sell lots and lots of books. How?

How about the Internet. Yes, I hear the Internet's full of money. Hey Internet! Buy my book! I set up a blogsite for it, an organ for Internet promotion — when I say “I”, I of course mean Steve Libbey, website designer extraordinaire — and then, looking around the Internet I found that “podcasts” were hot that month, so I recorded one of those — when I say “I” I of course mean Chet Lyster, recording engineer par excellence — and that was a real labor of joy, and garnered some small number of fans. (I'm not sure if any of those fans bought the book; you'd have to put that question to the number-crunchers in Marketing, who don't exist.) Then YouTube got huge, so I filmed a “book trailer” — when I say “I” I actually mean Danny Norton, superfilmmaker — and showed that to the Internet, and the Internet noticed it, briefly, and clicked on it some, and I got to count those clicks, chart them on a daily basis and try to feel excited about that. And then the Internet spotted a hamster eating popcorn on a piano and ran away.

So yes, I did some of that Internet marketing, but ... well, some people can do amazing things with Internet marketing, but in August I had just quit a job doing Internet marketing for other people and I was sick to death of it. I was losing my eyesight, my wrists and ass were hurting, I was starting to pronounce words like LOL and ROTFL out loud in normal conversation ... it was a bad scene. I needed a change.



### THREE: LET'S PUT ON A SHOW!

So I began to plan a promotional book tour. Sure, I'll sign books in funny-smelling malls, in hospitals, at bus stops, anywhere. I'm slutty like that. I just want to see the world. In fact, this book's release had been so delayed, and then my own release from employment so postponed, that by late 2008 I was quite desperate to be on the road.

Being desperate and impatient, I did a number of things totally wrong. I didn't give bookstores enough lead time, so most of them said "No," so the tour took places in bars and houses and theaters and street corners. All excellent places; none of them major points of sale for books.

But I did one thing right: I put together a first class show, a memorable, exciting, funny and disturbing evening of edu-tainment. I've seen a lot of author appearances that sucked

from mediocrity. Reading is performance, but performing is a different skill from writing. I can't really blame writers for mumbling, staring down, halting their words, speaking in monotone, et cetera ... but I don't have much patience for it either. I'm a computer-age kid. We all have A.D.D. and demand constant stimulation. I knew my book tour must not be boring. It had to kill.

I've also seen a lot of fantastic readings by great authors. Like Nicholson Baker, who punctuated his speech at the Portland Arts & Lecture series, a speech about the importance of trivia, by pulling startling props from behind his podium. Like Mark Saltzman, who combined martial arts, reading, storytelling and Q&A with charming self-deprecating humor at a reading in a now-defunct Palo Alto bookstore, and made lifelong fans of everybody in the room.

Whenever I'm privileged to watch someone who's the best at what they do, someone who's polished their thing to

an art, someone exercising pure skill and highly evolved technique with confidence and aplomb, I always think to myself: that looks easy. I could do that. So it was with these great speakers. I determined I would imitate the best parts of their performances slavishly, while improving upon those areas where I thought they sort of did it wrong.

The slideshow about bears was the first piece. I felt that I had more of a right to corral the public and sell them books if I was also performing some kind of public service. I had heard about, but never managed to see, Andrew Dickson's notorious PowerPoint presentations on topics such as Boredom, eBay Power Selling and How To Sell Out. I heard they were fantastic, so I figured I'd do something exactly like that, but with bears.

The point I wanted to make is that bears have suffered at the hands of humans since the two first met. Perhaps a long time ago it was sort of a fair fight but lately it's been a massacre. This is standard tree-hugging stuff, but of course I didn't want to be a boring propagandist. I also had a vague idea about solving the global warming problem by feeding people to bears, via a program of releasing them in major urban centers.

Then I got really busy booking the tour, and by the night before the official book release party in Portland I still hadn't created a slideshow. But it's like I always say: the eleventh hour is the best hour. So I designed a slideshow around results of the search term "bear" on Google, and titled the presentation BEARS: ARE THEY GOING TO EAT US? On opening night we had drastic AV difficulties due to the absence of one fucking cable, so I had to deliver the slideshow as a hastily-generated YouTube video on my phone. It went well, considering.

The second major piece of the performance was a demonstration of how to

behave around bears in the wild so as not to be eaten prematurely. (In the posters and promo material we abbreviated this to LIVE BEAR WRESTLING.)

I had researched the question of how to face down a bear in great detail during the writing of my novel. The narrator of the book is a guy who gets every single piece of that advice wrong, even to the point of standing around in Grizzly territory with bear bait smeared all over his clothing. But the funny thing about bear advice is, there's lots of it from all kinds of experts yet they often disagree on the details. Should you stand your ground or back away slowly? Speak loudly or in a normal tone? If you are charged should you look the bear in the eyes? Not wanting to spread disinformation, I figured the best I could do was demonstrate the wrong way to handle such a situation, and let the bear eat me.

Being eaten by a bear on stage is a cathartic experience. You see the bright light, your life flashes before you ... it's like the last act of Hamlet. And then, when you die, it's strangely relaxing. You've just had to smile and be funny and remember lines and cues for almost an hour, and now you can just be dead. On the first leg of the tour we had some stupid idea — when I say "we" I mean just myself — that the audience would mutiny if I actually died on stage. But on the second leg, I died all over the place and they loved it. And I loved being dead! Chewie the Bear would sign autographs while I'd wait for the venue operators or concerned audience members to drag me off stage. Some nights I waited quite a while, lying face down on the floor, breathing as slowly and shallowly as I could, listening to the startled, confused, amused crowd staring at me, wondering if the show is over yet, of if they're supposed to clap or if maybe I'm actually hurt ... priceless.

#### FOUR: THE ROAD GRINDS ON

##### VENICE, CALIFORNIA

Chet and I are in a Toys R Us to get a Rubik's Cube, and they haven't fucking got one. They've got a cheap robot video game mounted inside a fake Rubik's Cube that doesn't rotate, and they've got a plush Rubik's Cube doll that doesn't rotate either. They've got assloads of broken Bionicles in the Bionicles petting zoo, and they've got robot dinosaurs that say "Press this button to watch me come to life!" but that don't do anything when you press the button. It's January, and the Christmas Rush just happened, and Toys R Us resembles Sarajevo after siege. They're miserable and worried about the future, and they're all out of Rubik's Cubes. And we are pissed. Pissed because we're in LA, where you can't ever find any store that's not a chain store, and even if there are 7 of the store you want in LA, the closest one is still far away. And you expect the chain stores, for all their other million forms of sucking, to at least have a decent selection of stuff 'cause they are so damn large. But no.

We had a slideshow, we had a bear, we had bloody intestines, and for the second leg of the tour we had the bear sing a folk song about being a bear. Music, dancing, comedy, violence ... all in all, an excellent evening's value for the ADD set. The only flaw in our plan was that none of that stuff had much to do with the book. Remember the book? Oh yeah, the book! Obviously at some point I should read from the book. Demonstrate the product and its salutary effects. But compared to the rest of it, the book-reading portion of the evening seemed intensely boring. The bear just sat there, I just stood there ... reading, I'm sure, the finest work of English literature

since Jonathan Livingston Seagull, and doing so with incredible dramatic flair of course ... but still, after a singing, dancing bear? Forget it.

Chet's clever idea was that while I read from the novel, Chewie the bear would read from Field and Stream, or he would knit, or attempt to solve a Rubik's Cube. It was part of a running gag about the intelligence of bears, and it would also channel audience boredom constructively. It seemed funny at the time ... except that nothing seemed funny anymore, because the tour had really started to grind us down. We were drinking every night, passing out on dirty floors, lumpy couches and bony groupies, missing home, not bathing much, and spending all day every day in a car. It takes a toll. And then, Toys R Us says they're out of Rubik's Cubes, and we're back in L.A. traffic driving to some other Toys R Us on the other side of town...

At times like that, I asked myself: is this working? Is this the right way to promote a book? Isn't there some other easier way for the wee microbes of literature to infect their host?

Answer: probably not. If it was easy, everyone would do it. And touring plays to my strengths: I'm incredibly good-looking — from a distance — and I like to talk. I'm able to talk for a long time, and I'm very loud and hard to ignore. My friends and family in Portland encouraged me on this touring project. "Go away," they said, "go talk to someone else."

So we went. After the book release party in Portland we did five dates in the Pacific Northwest, with Danny Norton in the role of bear and AV specialist. Then, in January we did some California dates with Chet Lyster as bear and booking agent. It took just about that long to get it all perfect, because our very best night was our last night, in Ashland, Oregon.



## ASHLAND, OREGON AGAIN

Maybe it was the drinking. Maybe it was the tension of the tour. But everyone could tell that bear hated my guts, and when I fumbled my self-defense device and the bear lunged at my throat I heard cheers and shouts of joy from Satan's minions, and I think maybe even some side-betting.

The bear tore into me like a car crash. I hit the stage hard, continuing to lecture as he kicked and bit me. Slurring my speech and adding true panic, because I knew: this is where Chet pays me back for forgetting to brush my teeth, driving his car wrong, humming to a different tempo than his guitar playing. A kick in the ribs! Never mind, keep lecturing, keep educating. We're describing being mauled by a bear, and why it's bad. The bear reaches for my guts, finds my tie, and starts strangling me with it. Okay, play along with that. I'll breathe later. Remember, Chet can't see

well in that bear head. The stage lights are ultra-bright and people are whooping and laughing, and I'm thinking this is the last time I have to do this and tomorrow I get to see my family. The bear starts slamming my head against the stage. The audience loves that! Heavy metal — head banging — of course. Of course they love that. I finish the monologue, I die, the bear eats me some more, and it's all over.

We sold so many goddamn books that night! Did we sell books on this tour? Yes! We sold, like... dozens of books! Okay, not enough to pay for gas, but there's more benefit than can be counted in the direct sales. Internet sales are also up, and the seeds of legend have been planted. We're setting microbe-lit sales records. Now all I need to do is be eaten by a bear in every goddamn city in America, and we'll be on our way to the mid-sized big time. Slowly, surely, someday it will happen. Victory will be ours. I may be tiny, but my bear is large, and he will kick your ass!



# How to Write a Short Story!

*by Bradley Sands*

Sperm count lower than the adult entertainment clerk that scrubs it off the floor? Uterus so barren your wallet is filled with photos of an echo? If you meet any of the above criteria, consider leaving paper and ink behind as your legacy rather than fleshy regrets.

Begin with the plot. If one doesn't immediately jump out at you from behind the shower curtain, excavate your mind until you discover one that will dominate your fingertips for the next seventeen hours. I recommend using a bone saw. Use a plot that can be summed up in one sentence, a sentence containing so many words that your tongue will make a run for it before you finish explaining it to your neighbor.

Next, choose a title that will grab the potential reader. Endow it with enough strength to entrap its victim, but enough restraint to avoid crushing their windpipe. If you fail to capture an appropriate title, I suggest using something generic and capping it off with an exclamation mark.

"Invent" a character to be your protagonist. Conserve vital energies by endowing it with your characteristics while giving it a quirk that you don't share—this way, you can deny it's based on you. Give it a name you can remember, like the one you moan while looking in the mirror and flexing.

Come up with the ending before you get started. This way, the reader will be as surprised as you are.

To alleviate the suffering of insomniacs, make the first sentence extremely dull. Rewrite it, making it even duller. Do it again. Again.

Again. Be obsessive about your attempt to attain the epitome of dullness. Do it again and again and again until you put yourself to sleep. Have an assistant on hand to wake you up with smelling salts. Pay them in college credits and ice cream. Take delight in the status that comes with having your own personal intern.

Every sentence should be written this way.

Tear the seeds out of the first sentence and plant it in your toilet. Add fertilizer until the second sentence grows. It should propel your plot and continue to be dull, but not overshadow the dullness of the first sentence.

Take a Bic to your wrist and bleed the contents of your fifth sentence all over the wall. This will serve as your outline and you must always be two sentences ahead of yourself. Continue to add to the outline until you suffer major blood loss. Then drive yourself to the hospital, get your juices replenished, and start all over again.

Describe every incidental detail. Use no-frills language to describe each character's appearance. Give your reader the thousands of words needed to conjure up the images of the characters in their head. If this fails to occur, they will be unable to follow the plot, which should proceed at an excessively slow pace. Use realistic dialogue, the sort of stuff you would overhear in a plumbing supplies store.

Remember - Artificiality is bad!

Your story should feel like an extraordinarily long bus ride from a place you loathe to a destination that makes you want to use your return ticket before your feet touch the ground.

**Bizarro Fiction**

Your protagonist should not do a damned thing. Make them get pushed around from person to person and place to place as if they were trapped in a pinball machine. Have them accomplish their goals through no effort of their own. Extra points if they succeed through the efforts of a giant disembodied hand that descends from the sky.

Keep a lookout for clichéd phrases. Whenever you catch one, replace it with goofy rhyming words. Must be nonsensical!

Last but not least, every story must be written from the point of view of an eight year old who thinks and speaks as if they're fifty-two. Their mother must have either been recently diagnosed with cancer, dying from cancer for quite a while, or cancer's latest victim. Your pick! Failure to comply will result in your arrest by the literary police.

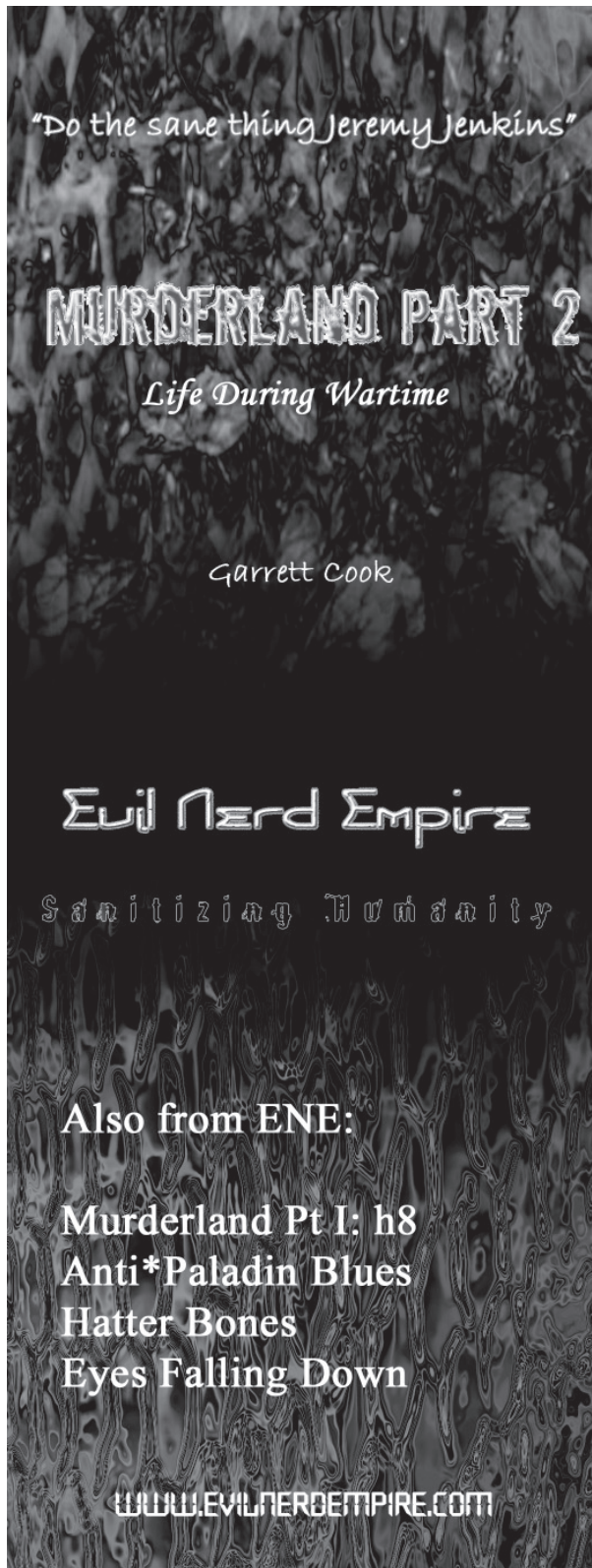
If you follow my successful formula to writing a short story, then your memory will live on forever in a university-backed literary journal...assuming it's printed on indestructible metal. Maybe somebody will even read your story.

- *Bradley Sands is the Editor-in-Chief of Bust Down the Door and Eat All the Chickens. This piece originally appeared in The Dream People, issue 27.*

**Bradley Sands is a Dick**  
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*From November 13-16, Portland, OR played host to the first ever BizarroCon. This was to be the largest gathering of bizarro authors to ever happen (at least so far). I attended and this is what I saw.*

## **The Squishiest Place on Earth** **A report on BizarroCon 2008**

*by Jeff Burk*

### **Thursday**

I normally don't like getting up before eleven but on this day I was up at six am. By noon, I was hanging out at the Eraserhead Offices with Carlton Mellick III, Gina Ranalli, Garrett Cook, and Rose O'Keefe. I was still wiping the sleep out of my eyes and it already felt like a party.

It was the first day of BizarroCon 2008. The largest gathering of bizarro writers to ever happen. An event that was months in the making and dreamed of for years. It would be a weekend of networking, planning, and, most importantly, having fun.

First on the itinerary was a tour of downtown Portland. Portland, Oregon is the home of the bizarro and I can think of no more appropriate city in the world. It is a city of painters, musicians, writers, and every other type of artist and entertainer. Where the streets are lined with independent businesses, performers, hippies, and punks. It is proudly independent and anti-corporate. One will see Portland's unofficial slogan, "Keep Portland Weird," plastered on shops, cars, and billboards.

It seems that the American Dream, of paving one's own way in the world, is still alive. Just mutated.

Our first stop was at Powell's City of Books. A world famous bookstore; four stories tall and each floor the size of a city block. In case you were wondering, they do carry bizarro titles. It was a fitting place to meet up with Andersen Prunty and Forrest Armstrong.

Now a gang, we hit up the gourmet cupcake shop for some delicious pastries.

**“What we all have in common is we have unusual dreams, and they are unusually strong.”**

**- Eckhard Gerdes**

It was time to head to BizarroCon's location, the beautiful Edgefield Manor. Edgefield is owned by the McMenamins company. They are a brewery whose claim to fame, outside of making tasty beer, is they buy up historical properties and convert them into bars and other fun environments. Edgefield is the primary showcase of what they do. A giant hotel with numerous bars, a distillery, pool-hall, theater, and cigar bar.

The entire property is decorated by local Portland artists. Every available surface, even down to the exit signs, are painted on. It gives the place an otherworldly and surreal feel. It is the perfect establishment to play

## “I love those movies about syphilis.”

- Garrett Cook

host to BizarroCon.

Next to the main building sat what was called, “the Ad House.” A three story manor that played host to many events and where many bizzaros stayed for the weekend. There are also stories that ghosts haunt the building and grab your feet at night. Why? I don’t know, that’s just what was told to me.

Bruce Taylor, Bradley Sands, Cameron Pierce, Kevin L Donihe, Eckhard Gerdes, and Jeremy Robert Johnson all arrived throughout the evening. People got food and brews and as people showed up to the hotel a full on party broke out.

As the Ad House filled up with people, it was amazing to watch everyone interact. There were so many different types of people with different backgrounds and beliefs. But after a few minutes we were all the best of friends. We were all bound by the desire to create something different and to meet likeminded people. It was if everyone had known if each for years rather than a first gathering.



Bizarro Beer!

The party finally wound down at four am. A rather terrifying fact for many, since the next day’s first event was a four hour writing workshop that about all of the partiers (including this writer) were participating in.

If the ghosts were about that night, we were all too comatose to notice.

### Friday

Amazingly, all dozen attendees of the writing workshop managed to make it on time, even with only three hours sleep. The workshop was being run by Carlton Mellick III with its focus being on creating “high concept bizarro.” Each person was to come up with a book title, pitch line, and back cover description. The concepts were read anonymously and then critiqued by everyone taking part in the workshop.

The point was to think about writing with more of a focus on what would people like to read. Mellick even gave out ten-dollar bills to the authors of the concepts that

## “Why are we not on acid and why are we not blowing shit up?”

- Kevin L. Donihe

he would actually buy. Even working under these limitations, the authors were able to come up amazing and interesting ideas. In fact, several of the stories made-up for the workshop will be turning into actual projects. Look for one of those stories in the next issue of this magazine.

The rest of the afternoon was filled with meetings of Eraserhead Press and the Bizarro Writers Association. This is where

## “He who lives by the shark dies by the shark”

- Kevin L. Donihe

we plotted for world domination. Everyone involved was sworn to secrecy by threat of death, so I can't report on what happened and what was said. But look for us coming soon to a puppet-government near you.

That evening was when the real fun began. Rose O'Keefe hosted a party to celebrate the release of four new titles. In addition to O'Keefe being the mastermind behind Eraserhead Press, she is also a home-brewer. For the occasion she made four special beers, one for each of the new books.

The new releases in question were; *The Kissing Bug* by Daniel Scott Buck, which also holds the honor of being the first release in Eraserhead Press's new children line - Spunk Goblin Books; *Shark Hunting in Paradise Garden*, the first novel from new author Cameron Pierce; *Apeshit*, Carlton Mellick III's new slasher-movie tribute/satire;

### The Magazine of

and, winner for longest bizarro book title, *The Rampaging Fuckers of Everything on the Crazy Shitting Planet of the Vomit Atmosphere* by Mykle Hansen.

Each author gave a spirited and rousing reading to an overjoyed (and lubricated) crowd. As with the previous evening, drinking and merriment went late into the night.

### Saturday

This was the big day. Readings and panels filled the morning and that evening was the Wonderland Awards Dinner and the Ultimate Bizarro Showdown. Today was the day that all the history making would happen. Bragging rights for years to come would be won in the coming hours. But first, breakfast.

Once everyone had full bellies, Gina Ranalli, Jeremy Robert Johnson, Kevin L. Donihe, and Carlton Mellick III started off the day's events with the *What Exactly is Bizarro?* panel. Less a lecture and more an open discussion with the crowd, the panelists explained what bizarro meant to them. Each



L to R: Jeremy Robert Johnson, Carlton Mellick III, Kevin L. Donihe, and Gina Ranalli at the What Is Bizarro? Panel

# BIZARRO

## CONVENTION



PORTLAND, OR  
OCT 22-25  
2009

**“Everything’s possible, everything’s easy. You just got to do it.”**

**- Mitch Maraude**

one had a slightly different answer but it all boiled down to, “it’s the weird shit.”

Next, Rose O’Keefe, Karen Townsend, Kristopher Young, Jeremy Needle, and Bradley Sands ran the *Bizarro Publisher Panel*. Here, each of the presenters explained what it is that they look for when publishing a piece. What type of stories and what is the best way to present them. It was an informal and illuminating look into the real-world functioning of a small press.

Throughout the rest of the afternoon was readings by the various attendees to the Con. Mitch Maraude, Bruce Taylor, Bradley Sands, Jess Gulbranson, Jeremy Needle, Forrest Armstrong, Eckhard Gerdes, Andersen Prunty, David Agranoff, and Jeremy Robert Johnson all entertained the crowd with stories and excerpts from their work. However the two stand-out readers were Garrett Cook and Kevin L. Donihe, who gave energetic and mesmerizing performances that had the crowd buzzing for the rest of the convention.

After a brief break, everyone gathered in Edgefield’s Ballroom for a fajita bar and cocktails. Also of note, was the display table of almost every single bizarro title ever published. It was most likely the largest, most complete, collection of bizarro fiction anywhere, ever.

Starting off the evening were the presentation of the Wonderland Award, the first award for outstanding bizarro fiction. There were two categories; best novel of 2007 and best collection of 2007 (for a full

list of nominees see the following section). Rose O’Keefe gave out the award for best novel to D. Harlan Wilson’s *Dr. Identity*. Unfortunately, Wilson was unable to attend so Andersen Prunty accepted the award on his behalf and humorously read an acceptance speech written by fellow-nominee Jeremy C. Shipp. Bruce Taylor gave out the award for best collection to *13 Thorns* by Gina Ranalli and Gus Fink. Ranalli was in attendance so she accepted the award with her G-Force 13 Posse backing her up at the front of the room (if you don’t know G-Force 13, go to Ranalli’s website and sign-up!).

Next was the event that everyone was the most excited, and most fearful, of; the Ultimate Bizarro Showdown! Hosted by Jeremy Robert Johnson in a white tuxedo with angel-wings, it was a fifteen author face-off. Eckhard Gerdes, Gina Ranalli, and Bruce Taylor were the judges presiding over this surreal and possibly dangerous affair. Before the event Johnson could be heard muttering to anyone that would listen, “Someone’s gonna die tonight.”

Fortunately, no deaths occurred. But those in attendance did get fake blood, obama masks, inflatable hammers, and kazoos. Originally scheduled as a one hour event, it ended up being three hours of epic weirdness. When it was all over three freaks stood above all others. Carlton Mellick III took third place and Mykle Hansen was second. The grand prize champion was Garrett Cook.

**“Just because my room is full of blinking diodes doesn’t mean I’m the Anti-Christ”**

**- Kevin L. Donihe**



## Bizarro Fiction

81

His prize, a giant inflatable moose head, a “sixty and sensational” sash, and bragging rights for a lifetime (or at least until next BizarroCon were he must defend his title).

It was then back to the Ad House for an epic night of celebration which went literary all night. Some, including yours truly, never slept.

## Sunday

As I sit here typing, I am having difficulties remembering Sunday. Perhaps the sleep deprivation had something to do with it. Or perhaps my brain was undergoing some kind of profound transformation after having spent so much time in the presence of so many wonderful and weird people.

The day was a haze of hugs and goodbyes. While many of us had just met three days previous, we were parting ways as old friends. Email address and phone numbers were exchanged.

No one walked away from the weekend without feeling invigorated (and exhausted) by the time spent at BizarroCon. Much of what you’ll see happen with the bizarro scene for the next couple years had their seeds sown during this weekend. It was an eventful of pure joy and creativity for all involved that is unlikely to be matched. At least, until the next BizarroCon.

**“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to kill all those people”**

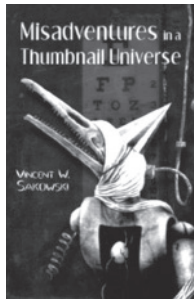
**- Kevin L. Donihe**



Garrett Cook clutching his prize for winning the first Ultimate Bizarro Showdown! Jeremy Robert Johnson, covered in fake blood and wearing angel wings, looks on from the background.

# The First Wonderland Book Awards for Outstanding Bizarro Fiction Awarded on November 15, 2008 at the Wonderland Awards Dinner

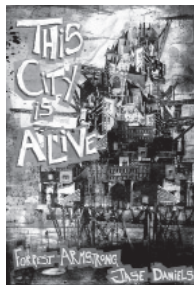
## Best Collection of 2007 Nominees



**Misadventures in a Thumbnail Universe by Vincent W. Sakowski** - Come and experience the misadventures of a man with a fish-bowl for a brain, a woman who gives birth to bunnies, and Pterodactyl Man, who has raw egg for a heart. All of this and more in ten twisted tales from a master of Bizarro, Vincent W. Sakowski. Dive deep into the surreal and satirical realms of his neo-classical Blender Fiction, filled with television shoes and flesh-filled skies. You'll be both glad and disturbed that you did.



**Discouraging at Best by John Edward Lawson** - Five interlinked tales that, when pieced together, paint a panorama of apathy, greed, and manipulation. We follow the self-inflicted plight of working class families and their efforts to step on others in the race to get ahead. We watch the petty wars of Nobel laureates. We become immersed in the minds of those caught in an ankle-biters rebellion. We are drawn into the intrigues and incompetence of those pulling the strings at the highest level of government. And, ultimately, we wonder: why?



**This City is Alive by Forrest Armstrong and Jase Daniels** - A surreal novella featuring paintings and illustrations by Jason Daniels. It merges the experimental nature of beat writers like Burroughs or Ginsberg with the modern surrealist sensibility of Steve Aylett's novels. The story follows two lines; Chevy as he leaves the bleak, empty island he was born on, and a homeless man named Simon Klepper enduring life on an eerie dystopian city in the middle of the ocean.



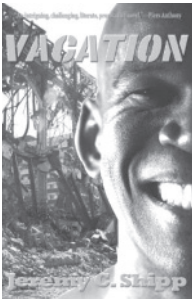
## Best Collection of 2007 Winner

**13 Thorns by Gus Fink and Gina Ranalli** - Thirteen tales of twisted, bizarro horror, from author Gina Ranalli and outsider artist Gus Fink. With Ranalli at the helm, and illustrated with drawings in Fink's unique style, fans of both of their work will want to see this, as well as anyone interested in a dark walk on the wild side.

### Best Novel of 2007 Nominees



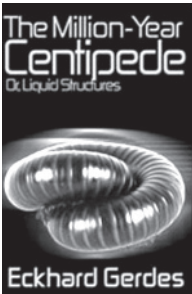
**Wall of Kiss by Gina Ranalli** - A woman. A wall. Sometimes love blooms in the strangest of places... What would happen if a woman, tired of previous broken relationships, instead fell in love with her wall? Would she be spurned yet again, or would it be a match made in heaven?



**Vacation by Jeremy C Shipp** - It's time for blueblood Bernard Johnson to leave his boring life behind and go on The Vacation, a yearlong corporate-sponsored odyssey. But instead of seeing the world Bernard is captured by terrorists, becomes a key figure in secret drug wars, and, worse, doesn't once miss his secure American Dream.

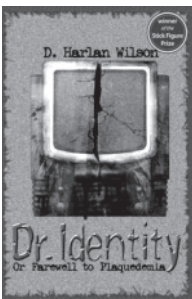


**Sausage Santa by Carlton Mellick III** - Santa isn't the jolly old elf he's been described as in Children's stories. He's a bit more grotesque than that. His eyes are pimento-stuffed olives, his teeth are walnuts, and his body is made of sausages. One snowy Christmas Eve, while visiting the Fry family, Sausage Santa is attacked by an evil force that is driven to destroy Christmas forever. It is an anti-Christmas spirit that loathes everything having to do with children and Jesus. After it steals his magic bag of presents, Santa calls upon Matthew Fry and his wife, Decapitron (a brutish warrior woman with a strange Christmas fetish and a candy cane sword), to help get it back and save Christmas for everyone.



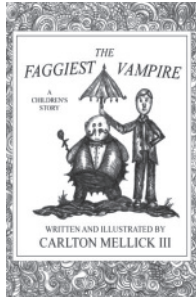
**Million Year Centipede by Eckhard Gerdes** - Wakelin, frontman of seminal rock group The Hinge, once wrote a poem so prophetic that to ignore its wisdom is to doom yourself to drown in blood. After realizing the power of his words he faked his own death. Now one obsessed fan is tracking Wakelin down...can he be found before it's too late?

### Best Novel of 2007 Winner



**Dr. Identity by D. Harlan Wilson** - For a professor at Corndog University it's quite acceptable to purchase a robotic doppelgänger and have it teach your classes for you. But how does it reflect on your teaching skills when your doppelgänger murders the whole class? Follow the Dystopian Duo (Dr. Blah Blah Blah and his robot Dr. Identity) on a killing spree of epic proportions through the irreal postapocalyptic city of Bliptown where time ticks sideways, artificial Bug-Eyed Monsters punish citizens for consumer-capitalist lethargy, and ultraviolence is as essential as a daily multivitamin.

## Bizarro Book Reviews



### **The Faggiest Vampire** by Carlton Mellick III Spunk Goblin Books

Last November, Eraserhead Press launched its line of children's books, Spunk Goblin Books, with the release of *The Kissing Bug* by Daniel Scott Buck. Now the spunk goblins behind this wicked imprint have returned, releasing two new books in the first half of 2009. Among these titles is *The Faggiest Vampire*, written and illustrated by prolific Bizarro author Carlton Mellick III. Although Mellick is best known for writing books that most parents wouldn't let their children touch with a ten-foot dildo, *The Faggiest Vampire* is a story that will satisfy readers of every age.

*The Faggiest Vampire* tells the story of Dargoth Van Gloomfang, the aging, pot-bellied vampire who is reigning champion of Gneirweil's great Mustache Competition. But as Dargoth and his assistant Rococo (who loves nothing more than making party hats) prepare for the next competition, he must face a threat to his crown: Baron Van Ravensgraves. Younger and hipper than Dargoth, Ravensgraves is a vampire who lived in Los Angeles before returning to the Land of Broodsarrow, and despite offending the vampires' distaste for change, he just might be the faggiest vampire of them all. Rather than letting his mustache speak for itself, Dargoth succumbs to self-doubt and petty jealousy, and

initiates a cycle of sabotage and retribution resulting in a moral lesson that is relevant for children as well as adults.

*The Faggiest Vampire* is a special book, showcasing an author at the height of his storytelling power. Mellick's Gorey-esque illustrations compliment his style so well that it's hard to fathom why he hasn't illustrated a book since *The Baby Jesus Butt Plug*. This is the type of book that anyone with even the slightest creative hankering dreams of creating. Go out and buy copies of *The Faggiest Vampire* for your children and parents, coworkers and friends, and most especially, buy it for strangers! This mustache-happy book should be devoured by everyone.

- Cameron Pierce



### **The Caterer #3** by Steve Aylett Floating World Comics

Steve Aylett is the author of numerous books but none of his creations are as well known, or well loved, as his fictitious alter-ego, Jeff Lint. The character has "earned" his own biography, book of critical essays, and now, a comic book. Reprinted in the U.S. by Floating World Comics, *The Caterer* is issue number three (but is the only issue published) of Steve Aylett writing as Jeff Lint. *The Caterer* is an extremely absurd piece of comedic gold.

To attempt and describe the plot of *The Caterer* is an exercise in futility, but I'll try my best. The comic follows the main character Jack Marsden, a slacker high school student with Indiana Jones tendencies, as he slips in and out of hallucinations and goes on madcap adventures. The police are also after him, for some reason or another that is never completely made clear. The story matters very little as Jack Marsden runs from panel to panel in almost stream-of-conscious logic.

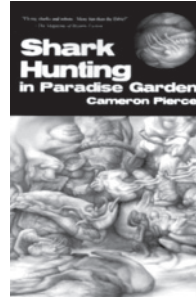
Aylett adds to the charm by experimenting with the format and structure of comics themselves. The simple illustrations are used to their fullest effect and Aylett makes the most of his low budget. Most amusingly, he explores the principle of "stillness." This is where the exact same panel is repeated numerous times to create the effect of awkward silence.

There are also numerous extra goodies thrown in for your reading pleasure. Fake ads, posters, and insane fan letters all add to the Jeff Lint meta-joke.

It has taken way too long for Bizarro fiction to find its way to the comic format. The extreme and outlandish imagery that most Bizarro contains lends itself quite easily to the dual literature/visual art nature of comics. *The Caterer* proves that the genre can translate itself to a variety of formats. Steve Aylett and Floating World Comics have brought the weird-loving public a wonderful piece of illustrated strangeness.  
- Jeff Burk

## **The Traveling Dildo Salesman** *by Kevin L. Donihe*

Coming in a future issue of  
The Magazine of Bizarro Fiction



## **Shark Hunting in Paradise Garden** **by Cameron Pierce** **Eraserhead Press**

The debut novel of Cameron Pierce is a total assault on one's reading senses. There are robots, wizard heads, dead leprechauns, a person whose super power is turning living things into mannequin versions of themselves, the Tree of Life, and shitloads of flying sharks, all of which are in the Garden of Eden. Damn.

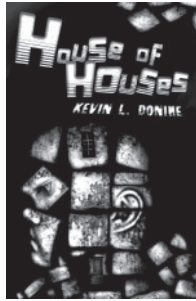
It seems some religious fanatics in the future got a message through time-space from Adam and Eve to come to the Garden of Eden, but when they get there they find thousands of flying (and hungry) sharks and robots. Their ship destroyed, the time-travelers must fight their way to Adam and Eve.

Pierce assaults the reader with new absurd ideas every couple of sentences which is the book's greatest strength and weakness. For most of the book, this makes the story exceptionally enjoyable as the reader does not know where the next blow to their rationale will come from. At a few points, however, Pierce is throwing so much in that it can be difficult keeping up with him. It is very much worth it to do your best and stick with the book through to the end. For a story with so many seemingly random ideas, it all comes to a surprising, satisfying, and coherent conclusion.

This leads one to believe that all the strange ideas in the book were not just haphazardly thrown on the page, but carefully constructed and that is just the super-strange way Pierce tells his tales. One cannot but wonder what he will do in his future writing career. Once he has tempered his imagination, Pierce has a strong possibility

of being one of the best and most insane of all bizarro writers. As it stands, *Shark Hunting in Paradise Garden* is the strongest debut book yet in the bizarro scene and with robots and flying sharks, it is more fun than the Bible.

- Jeff Burk



**House of Houses**  
by Kevin L. Donihe  
Eraserhead Press

Kevin Donihe has been writing Bizarro longer than almost everyone else, and always with great talent. But in his latest work, *House of Houses*, he has broken into new personal revelations – the book is, first off, *stranger* than anything he’s done before (Carlton Mellick III calls it “the weirdest book ever written” – it’s about a man in love, *really* in love, with his house, Helen), and more honest and genuinely expressive. It is in this strange paradox that the immense achievement of this work lies.

When Mellick and I call this book strange, we’re not joking – a guy named Carlos wakes up to find his ceiling plush up against his nose, the roof caved in and his surroundings resembling a pollution-wasted swamp much more than a house interior, and is ushered through the day into House Heaven in a series of events that constantly strain against reality as we believe we know it. The world is in utter disorientation, with every now-homeless human being lined up outside of some great building that none of them seem to understand, lunatic-prophets shouting in the streets, and no one for company but Tony, “a self-declared superhero” who protects the world from

**The Magazine of**

“quasi-dimensional psychopomps” with his “sexpounding abilities” – meaning, he rapes parallel-dimension aliens to keep them away from the citizens of the neighborhood. And all this is before even entering House Heaven...

This is a place where houses are freed from the eternity they spent on earth serving humans as homes. And at first, it seems that the lucky few humans to survive the house apocalypse are here for paradise too. But under the dictatorship of Manhaus, a half-man-half-house asshole (who takes the form of a puppet, because that’s what Carlos fears most), humans get nothing in Heaven but the lash of revenge. Houses now live inside of structures made out of human-bricks. Humans slave away from sunrise until dusk, creating a utopia that they are expendable in, and when they slow in their work or make too many mistakes, they disappear forever. But Carlos still has Tony for company, and still dreams of finding Helen again, somewhere in this confused paradise.

Then it comes time for Carlos to get a vacation, and he decides to search for Helen. I’ll keep you from the details for fear of spoiling any of the story, but it is here that Donihe most prominently reflects on love. The feelings he expresses throughout the book are very meditative and raw, and are not just functions of the story but genuine emotion. If it were not for this, I would still tell you to pick up this book, for the same reasons you should pick up all the best Bizarro books: they’re fun as hell to read and they’ll fill your head with delirium-images. But Donihe has expressed something much deeper than mere escapist joy here. The feeling in it is poignant, and often profound. And that’s one of the greatest achievements in it, because – think about it – we’re talking about a fucking *house*. Carlos is in love with his *house*. But it doesn’t matter

# Fiction that Foams at the Mouth



## Blankety Blank

D. Harlan Wilson

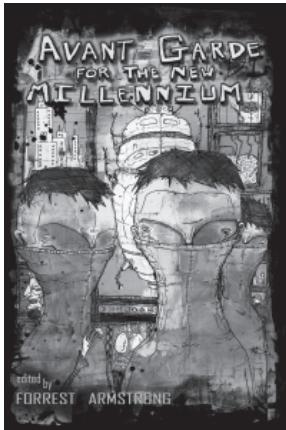
pb 978-1-933293-50-9, \$14.95  
hc 978-1-933293-57-8, \$29.95

Rutger Van Trout has problems but the worst is not that his son might be a werewolf. It's not his obsession with transforming his house into a three-ring barnyard or his wife's haunted skeleton. The complication has invaded his community in the form of a new breed of serial

killer, who stalks from house to house leaving a bloodbath that would make Jack the Ripper himself blush.

"...iconoclasts will relish every word."

—Booklist



## Avant-Garde for the New Millennium

Forrest Armstrong, editor

pb 978-1-933293-71-5, \$14.95

Words are slippery things and though we have bridled them with grammar, feel at ease in the presence of a common turn of phrase, they have not been completely tamed. But there are still writers who are both brave and foolhardy enough to let words out of their cages.

Editor Forrest Armstrong has gone in search of these experimenters, alchemists of verbiage, who wrestle with words in dark places and returned with something newly minted, transmogrified and fresh for us to puzzle over.

"...contains some of the meatiest, most carnivorous fiction being produced in the English language."

—Eckhard Gerdes, ed. *The Journal of Experimental Fiction*



## Sheep & Wolves

Jeremy C. Shipp

pb 978-1-933293-52-3, \$13.95  
hc 978-1-933293-59-2, \$24.95

Jeremy Shipp is the master of the mind-bending tale. Much like his critically acclaimed novel, *Vacation*, these stories bewitch and transport the reader. Themes of alienation and cultural homogenization on a global scale are explored in close detail. Though you may not

know where Shipp will travel next each story is an unforgettable thrill-ride and you'll be glad you took the trip.

"... one of the more bizarre of the bizarro writers..."

—Horror Fiction Review



## Bare Bone #11

Kevin L. Donihe, editor

pb 978-1-933929-32-3, \$9.95

With a surgeon's skill, editor Kevin L. Donihe stitches a diverse collection of fiction and poetry together to bring *Bare Bone* to life. Another Dr. Frankenstein, he assembles the pieces of others, birthing one complete monster to send lurching towards the darkness. This

issue includes pieces from Cody Goodfellow, Steve Rasnic Tem, Gary McMahan, Kurt Newton, Ronald Damien Malfi, Jeffrey Stadt, Cameron Pierce and Paul Finch among others.

"...just about every conceivable form of dark fiction can be found in its pages."

—Tangent Online

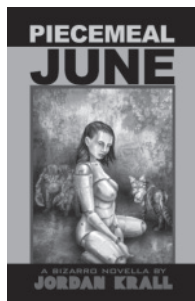
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SCREAMING  
PRESS**

[www.RawDogScreaming.com](http://www.RawDogScreaming.com)

at all. The love in it is real, and the insights in it are honest. I promise you that you will not only have a blast reading this, but that it will touch you. It is a reflection of love found and love lost – and although the oddity of that love being between a man and house keeps it from ever being cliché, it never stops anything from applying to genuine human love, either.

This is a great book, really. One of the best books Bizarro has produced. It's absolutely essential for the Bizarro fan – and if you're reading this magazine, that means you. So if you haven't read it yet, I just gotta ask: WHY THE FUCK NOT?

- Forrest Armstrong



**Piecemeal June**  
by Jordan Krall  
Eraserhead Press

Kevin is your average loser, living above a porn-shop with his tarot reading cat. In addition to divination, his cat has also been bringing individual pieces of a full-size sex doll. Once Kevin has all the pieces glued together the doll comes to life. Her name is June and she is on the run from multi-dimensional pornographers.

*Piecemeal June* is the first novella from Jordan Krall. Eraserhead Press has managed to get an interesting new talent. The book is filled with grotesque imagery of perverted sexuality but this is no exploration story. Kevin is seeking love and companionship from June. Using a sex-doll as a representation of one's emotional longings was a wonderfully clever plot device from Krall.

Krall writing flows nice and easy

### The Magazine of

whether he is detailing the coming-to-life of a sex doll, or crab-people assassins. The surrealism and weirdness never overwhelm the sweet sensitivity of Kevin's inner plight. This story is for the romantic in all-of-us, while not neglecting the part that craves demon-spunk.

Eraserhead press has consistently published cutting-edge genre works and *Piecemeal June* continues in this trend of excellence. Jordan Krall is an exciting new voice in the horror scene. He combines gross-out with occultism but never forgets that characters are what make a story. If you are of the feeling that horror has been boring lately, *Piecemeal June* may be a small morsel (only about seventy pages) but it's just what you have been craving.

- Jeff Burk



**Discouraging at Best**  
by John Edward Lawson  
Raw Dog Screaming Press

*Discouraging at Best* is the latest collection of stories from John Edward Lawson (*Last Burn in Hell*, *Pocketful of Loose Razorblades*). Never one to shy away from controversial subject matter, Lawson is now taking on one of the most cherished of all social structures, the idea of "family." The book is composed of four stories that provide intimate views into the inner workings of four very different families.

The first family we meet is that of the Havenots; a very poor family who is led by an extremely abusive father. Tired of being poor, he attempts to raise some money by



hiring out his son to give “whippings” to the neighborhood children. The next family is that of a soon-to-be Nobel Prize winner on the night before the grand ceremony. Despite the joyous occasion, they are involved in a fight that could figuratively and literally tear them apart. The third story is about two brothers, an acid-tripping author, and a perverted store owner.

Next is the stand-out-story of the book, “Maybe it’s Racist.” It is a tour of the White House and the first family with all the conspiracy theories and kinky sex that you would expect. When a Phrenologist gets unrestricted access to the President and his immediate family, she begins to uncover secrets that could the administration apart. Rounding out the book is a short piece that humorously and poetically ties all the stories together

Billed as a collection of short stories, the book still could still work as a novel. While only vaguely related in content and characters, they all address the similar theme of failed families. Despite the wide variety of approaches to the issue, each story is ultimately about individuals being hurt, physically or emotionally, by their family. It seems that Lawson has a lot to say on the matter and it’s all bad.

The content of the stories moves from profoundly disturbing to surrealistically hysterical, giving the book a manic feel. The reader is constantly off balance as the topic manner is just as likely to be aliens as it is to be child abuse. Somehow this all works together and the stories do not feel like part of a collection, but each are their own unique exploration of the book’s themes.

John Edward Lawson has written a powerful book with *Discouraging at Best*. Each of the stories is strong enough to stand

on their own, but when taken in the thematic context of the rest of the book they take on added levels. Raw Dog Screaming Press has a real winner on their hands. It is a disturbing, thought-provoking, and laugh-inducing book, and is highly recommended.

- Jeff Burk



**13 Thorns**  
by Gus Fink  
and Gina Ranalli  
Afterbirth Books

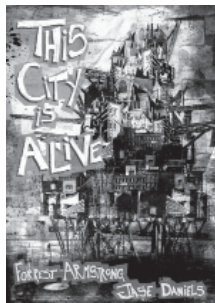
Over the past three years, Gina Ranalli has become well-known among horror and bizarro readers for her quirky, dark, and highly original storytelling. In November 2006, I wrote that her novella *Suicide Girls in the Afterlife* was “a promise of what to expect when the Ranalli-Afterbirth duo hits full stride.” Approximately four months after that review appeared, Afterbirth Books released *13 Thorns*, which went on to win the first ever Wonderland Award for best collection. It also happens to show what Ranalli can do working under a unique constraint. All of the stories in *13 Thorns* are based on the artwork of collaborator Gus Fink. Most of the stories are as intriguing as the artwork which inspired them (with the occasional misfire, like Mr. Shadows) and perfectly capture Gus Fink’s spooky punk aesthetic.

You know those collections that promise ghouls, guts, and other horrors but don’t fully deliver? Rest assured, *13 Thorns* never disappoints. Whether the protagonist is a sheltered little girl (“Castle Girl”) or an obese boy (“Fat Kid”), they come across as realistic, sympathetic beings who love,

dream, and above all, suffer. Grim endings are aplenty here, which gives them the flavor of early fairy tales. A personal favorite, "Scarecrow," will break your heart.

These stories about big, malicious rats, lake creatures, a reality television show created by aliens are all weird enough to satisfy bizarro readers, but will equally please those with horror leanings. Although many of Gina Ranalli's other short stories are stronger than these thirteen "thorns," the collection is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a fine display of a talented writer (in addition to a talented visual artist) and an exceptional achievement of creepy and bizarre fiction.

- Cameron Pierce



**This City Is Alive**  
by Forrest Armstrong  
and Jase Daniels  
Trip Lit

Flipping through the pages of *This City is Alive* by Forrest Armstrong (handling the words) and Jase Daniels (artwork) immediately causes one to question what they are in store for. The book is a combination of short stories, poems, footnotes, and vibrant paintings. Once one starts to read, it all becomes even stranger.

The book is an account of an unnamed city, those who live there and those who encounter it. The exact nature of the city is not known, but it seems to spell doom for all who end up there. The stories bounce around from various perspectives, and while the individual characters never know what is going on, the reader is given a broad, if confusing, view of life in the city. By using stories, poetry, and even a scientific text, Armstrong creates a

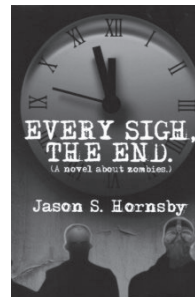
world that feels alive.

To add realism, if one wants to call it that, is the artwork of Jase Daniels. His brightly colored surrealist visions give the book's world an added sense of life. The pictures show the people and events of the stories. One of the most memorable paintings is of the internal organs of a "Grillo," a small hamster-like creature that is the source of a popular drug in the book's world.

*This City Is Alive* is essentially a psychedelic experience in print form. Like many drugs, the beginning is a bit difficult. But you will soon be drawn into this new weird world through the smooth prose and beautiful art. When it is over you'll have just as many answers as questions. Forrest Armstrong and Jase Daniels have created a unique work that will leave your brain more than a little tweaked.

Note: This book is now out of print and was originally limited to approximately sixty copies.

- Jeff Burk



**Every Sigh, The End**  
by Jason Hornsby  
Permuted Press

I know what you're thinking, "sigh, not another zombie novel, how unoriginal." But fear not dear fright fan, *Every Sigh, The End* (a novel about zombies) by Jason S. Hornsby manages to put an original spin on the walking dead and in the process deconstructs society, human interaction, and the horror genre itself.

Ross Orringer is twenty-six and his life is falling apart. He sells low-budget horror films that he hates with his self-centered best

friend Preston. He is cheating on his girlfriend with her closest friend. To make matters worse he suspects his family is involved in an elaborate conspiracy involving spies, strange film crews in dark alleys, zombies, and alternate universes.

It all comes to a head on New Years Eve, 1999, when Preston's party is crashed by film crews and zombies, lots of zombies. Soon Ross' life is turned into one of the trashy movies he sells, as everyone he cares about is put in danger for the benefit of the film cameras.

Hornsby has crafted a unique and frightening novel. The threat of the zombies is overshadowed by the mysterious film crews documenting the whole event. These creepy figures ensure that the drama level stays high and their camera never becomes bored. When it becomes clear that some of those trapped by the zombies are in league with the filmmakers, life-long friends turn on each other in desperate attempts at survival.

It is in this desperation that the novel's central themes come out; distrust and betrayal. Each of the survivors has a long and torrid history with each other and all of their past wrongdoings and treacheries come bubbling to the surface. As once long-time friends become bitter enemies the sense of horror moves from the zombies and film crews to the petty human cruelties of which everyone is capable.

*Every Sigh, The End (A novel about zombies)* is a surreal and frightening novel. There is a lot for the reader to sink one's teeth into. Do not let the zombies scare you away; this is a multi-layered story of conspiratorial horror, fear of one's fellow man, and a deconstruction of reality itself.

- Jeff Burk



**The Menstruating Mall**  
by Carlton Mellick III  
Eraserhead Press

*The Menstruating Mall*, the eighth novel from bizarro author Carlton Mellick III, is part Agatha Christie murder-mystery and part Kurt Vonnegutt science-fiction social satire. We follow ten stereotypical characters (the yuppie, the jock, the cowboy, etc...) who are trapped inside a mall with a killer on the loose. The message "all the mundanes must die" is found after the first murder so the various characters attempt to survive by proving their individuality. When the mall's walls begin to bleed, things start getting weird.

Mellick uses this simple, yet very strange, plot to comment upon marketable rebellion. The characters dress a certain way or use a certain product to try and deter the killer. When it does come time for a character to break out of their mold, it is an internal transformation rather than one of appearance.

The story's main target is those who define themselves by their possessions. Each one of the main characters views themselves as unique and a counter to mainstream culture, yet each one takes their identity in some way from mainstream culture. Through this paradox Mellick questions the viability of the very idea of a counter-culture. If your life can be bought and sold in a mall, how unique can it be?

"This book is a work of sarcasm," states the Author's Note. The book bites, chews, swallows, and regurgitates our consumer counter-culture, demonstrating Mellick's technique for holding up a funhouse mirror to the real world. Highly regarded by his fanatical fan base, *The Menstruating Mall* is a true underground classic.

- Jeff Burk

Each issue we get a different bizarro author to tell us about a book they wrote that will never be published and why.

*These are the lost, the forgotten, the mysterious, the*

## **Bizarro Books that Never Were: Omega Flappy** *by Kevin L Donihe*

*The Flappy Parts* is an evil book, but I don't blame the poor thing. I just went about creating it in the wrong way.

In mid-2004, I started the manuscript with no clue as to what it was about. The characters? I didn't know them either. A bad idea, but it was a bit of an experiment, too. I thought that the magic of the writing process might kick in and unify what would ultimately be a very free-flowing and organic book.

The process, however, proved more rocky than magical. I stopped and I started; I started and I stopped. Separate pieces simply refused to connect in a meaningful way. At times, I thought I'd found connections, but they were just long, frayed strings in disguise. Still, I kept at it, and, with each restart, *The Flappy Parts* became hungrier for words. Like a sucker, I gave it what it wanted.

By fall 2007, I had two drafts. One - circa 2004-2005 - consisted of 30,000 words of disconnected crap that, via the following paragraph, provided the name for the novel: "Enlarged mouse parts dangle over my head. I swat at them, and they swat at me. I wonder if they're sentient, or if they're just mad, flapping things without souls."

The other draft - circa 2007, and two-times longer than the first, as I'd finally decided what the book was about - feature three segments that were supposed to mirror

*Grape City*, only from the perspective of the bang-murders and rape-slayers, and not a put-upon, fast food-working demon named Charles.

Over the course of the novel, the main character was to remember that rape and murder weren't always socially acceptable activities, that his reality had been constructed for him. This would ultimately lead to a failed personal rebellion, with him ending up, literally, as sludge on a rock. Due to chronic stopping-and-starting, however, the segments seemed like glued-together parts from three unrelated works.

In November 2007, I finally accepted the inevitable and embraced defeat.

My ego was bruised. I doubted I could ever write another book. After typing the last *Flappy* word, six months passed before I started *Washer Mouth: The Man Who Was a Washing Machine*. I'd wanted this to be a quick, confidence-restoring novella, but it wound up being a 66,400-word novel that took almost eleven months to complete. Still, it scoured away all remaining *Flappy Parts* residue. For that, I'll always be grateful.

There may be a book titled *The Flappy Parts*, but it won't resemble the one currently taking up space on my hard drive. What will be it about? I can't say, but you better believe I'll know before I start writing the thing. I've learned my lesson, and don't want another *Flappy* albatross hanging around my neck.

# Bizarro books

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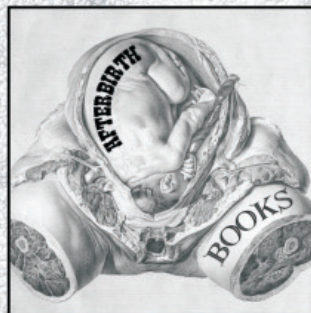
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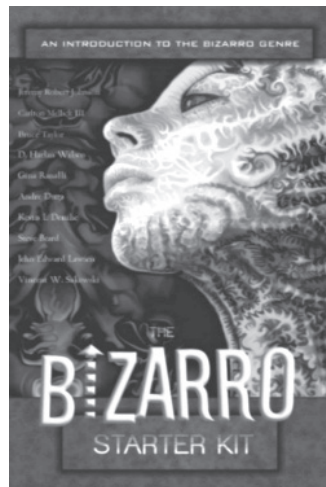


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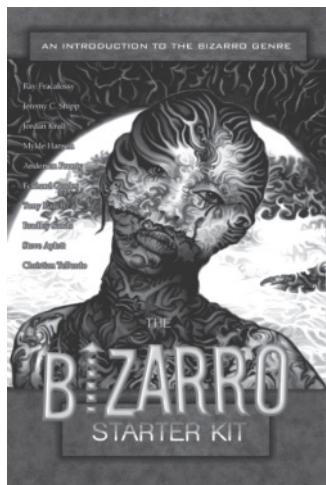
Introduce yourselves to the bizarre genre and all of its authors with the Bizarro Starter Kit series. Each volume features short novels and short stories by ten of the leading bizarre authors, designed to give you a perfect sampling of the genre for only \$5 plus shipping.



**BB-0X1**  
**“The Bizarro Starter Kit”**  
**(Orange)**

Featuring D. Harlan Wilson, Carlton Mellick III, Jeremy Robert Johnson, Kevin L. Donihe, Gina Ranalli, Andre Duza, Vincent W. Sakowski, Steve Beard, John Edward Lawson, and Bruce Taylor.

**236 pages \$5**



**BB-0X2**  
**“The Bizarro Starter Kit”**  
**(Blue)**

Featuring Ray Fractalossy, Jeremy C. Shipp, Jordan Krall, Mykle Hansen, Andersen Prunty, Eckhard Gerdes, Bradley Sands, Steve Aylett, Christian TeBordo, and Tony Rauch.

**244 pages \$5**



BB-001 **“The Kafka Effekt” D. Harlan Wilson** - A collection of forty-four irreal short stories loosely written in the vein of Franz Kafka, with more than a pinch of William S. Burroughs sprinkled on top. **211 pages \$14**

BB-002 **“Satan Burger” Carlton Mellick III** - The cult novel that put Carlton Mellick III on the map. Six punks get jobs at a fast food restaurant owned by the devil in a city violently overpopulated by surreal alien cultures. **236 pages \$14**

BB-003 **“Some Things Are Better Left Unplugged” Vincent Sakwoski** - Join The Man and his Nemesis, the obese tabby, for a nightmare roller coaster ride into this postmodern fantasy. **152 pages \$10**

BB-004 **“Shall We Gather At the Garden?” Kevin L Donihe** - Donihe’s Debut novel. Midgets take over the world, The Church of Lionel Richie vs. The Church of the Byrds, plant porn and more! **244 pages \$14**

BB-005 **“Razor Wire Pubic Hair” Carlton Mellick III** - A genderless humandildo is purchased by a razor dominatrix and brought into her nightmarish world of bizarre sex and mutilation. **176 pages \$11**



BB-006 **“Stranger on the Loose” D. Harlan Wilson** - The fiction of Wilson’s 2nd collection is planted in the soil of normalcy, but what grows out of that soil is a dark, witty, otherworldly jungle....**228 pages \$14**

BB-007 **“The Baby Jesus Butt Plug” Carlton Mellick III** - Using clones of the Baby Jesus for anal sex will be the hip sex fetish of the future. **92 pages \$10**

BB-008 **“Fishyfleshed” Carlton Mellick III** - The world of the past is an illogical flatland lacking in dimension and color, a sick-scape of crispy squid people wandering the desert for no apparent reason. **260 pages \$14**

BB-009 **“Dead Bitch Army” Andre Duza** - Step into a world filled with racist teenagers, cannibals, 100 warped Uncle Sams, automobiles with razor-sharp teeth, living graffiti, and a pissed-off zombie bitch out for revenge. **344 pages \$16**

BB-010 **“The Menstruating Mall” Carlton Mellick III** - “The Breakfast Club meets Chopping Mall as directed by David Lynch.” - Brian Keene **212 pages \$12**



BB-011 **“Angel Dust Apocalypse” Jeremy Robert Johnson** - Meth-heads, man-made monsters, and murderous Neo-Nazis. “Seriously amazing short stories...” - Chuck Palahniuk, author of Fight Club **184 pages \$11**

BB-012 **“Ocean of Lard” Kevin L Donihe / Carlton Mellick III** - A parody of those old Choose Your Own Adventure kid’s books about some very odd pirates sailing on a sea made of animal fat. **176 pages \$12**

BB-013 **“Last Burn in Hell” John Edward Lawson** - From his lurid angst-affair with a lesbian music diva to his ascendance as unlikely pop icon the one constant for Kenrick Brimley, official state prison gigolo, is he’s got no clue what he’s doing. **172 pages \$14**

BB-014 **“Tangerinephant” Kevin Dole 2** - TV-obsessed aliens have abducted Michael Tangerinephant in this bizarro combination of science fiction, satire, and surrealism. **164 pages \$11**

BB-015 **“Foop!” Chris Genoa** - Strange happenings are going on at Dactyl, Inc, the world’s first and only time travel tourism company. “A surreal pie in the face!” - Christopher Moore **300 pages \$14**



BB-016 **“Spider Pie” Alyssa Sturgill** - A one-way trip down a rabbit hole inhabited by sexual deviants and friendly monsters, fairytale beginnings and hideous endings. **104 pages \$11**

BB-017 **“The Unauthorized Woman” Efram Emerson** - Enter the world of the inner freak, a landscape populated by the pre-dead and morticians, by cockroaches and 300-lb robots. **104 pages \$11**

BB-018 **“Fugue XXIX” Forrest Aguirre** - Tales from the fringe of speculative literary fiction where innovative minds dream up the future’s uncharted territories while mining forgotten treasures of the past. **220 pages \$16**

BB-019 **“Pocket Full of Loose Razorblades” John Edward Lawson** - A collection of dark bizarro stories. From a giant rectum to a foot-fungus factory to a girl with a biforked tongue. **190 pages \$13**

BB-020 **“Punk Land” Carlton Mellick III** - In the punk version of Heaven, the anarchist utopia is threatened by corporate fascism and only Goblin, Mortician’s sperm, and a blue-mohawked female assassin named Shark Girl can stop them. **284 pages \$15**





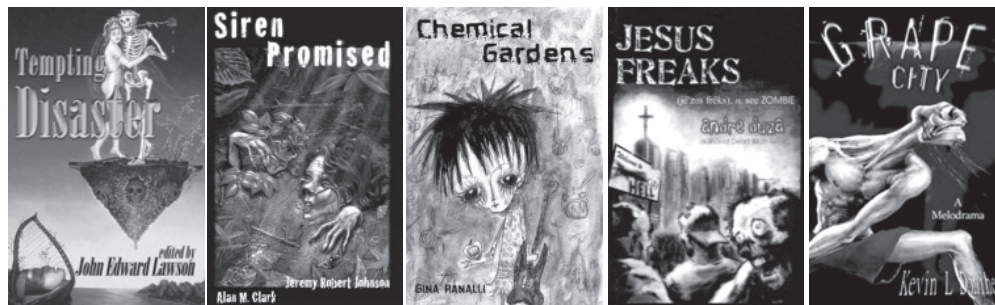
BB-021 “**Pseudo-City**” **D. Harlan Wilson** - Pseudo-City exposes what waits in the bathroom stall, under the manhole cover and in the corporate boardroom, all in a way that can only be described as mind-bogglingly unreal. **220 pages \$16**

BB-022 “**Kafka’s Uncle and Other Strange Tales**” **Bruce Taylor** - Anslent and his giant tarantula (tormentor? fri-end?) wander a desecrated world in this novel and collection of stories from Mr. Magic Realism Himself. **348 pages \$17**

BB-023 “**Sex and Death In Television Town**” **Carlton Mellick III** - In the old west, a gang of hermaphrodite gunslingers take refuge from a demon plague in Telos: a town where its citizens have televisions instead of heads. **184 pages \$12**

BB-024 “**It Came From Below The Belt**” **Bradley Sands** - What can Grover Goldstein do when his severed, sentient penis forces him to return to high school and help it win the presidential election? **204 pages \$13**

BB-025 “**Sick: An Anthology of Illness**” **John Lawson, editor** - These Sick stories are horrendous and hilarious dissections of creative minds on the scalpel’s edge. **296 pages \$16**



BB-026 “**Tempting Disaster**” **John Lawson, editor** - A shocking and alluring anthology from the fringe that examines our culture’s obsession with taboos. **260 pages \$16**

BB-027 “**Siren Promised**” **Jeremy Robert Johnson** - Nominated for the Bram Stoker Award. A potent mix of bad drugs, bad dreams, brutal bad guys, and surreal/incredible art by Alan M. Clark. **190 pages \$13**

BB-028 “**Chemical Gardens**” **Gina Ranalli** - Ro and punk band Green is the Enemy find Kreepkins, a surfer-dude warlock, a vengeful demon, and a Metal Priestess in their way as they try to escape an underground nightmare. **188 pages \$13**

BB-029 “**Jesus Freaks**” **Andre Duza** - For God so loved the world that he gave his only two begotten sons... and a few million zombies. **400 pages \$16**

BB-030 “**Grape City**” **Kevin L. Donihe** - More Donihe-style comedic bizarro about a demon named Charles who is forced to work a minimum wage job on Earth after Hell goes out of business. **108 pages \$10**



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BB-032 “**Extinction Journals**” **Jeremy Robert Johnson** - An uncanny voyage across a newly nuclear America where one man must confront the problems associated with loneliness, insane diets, radiation, love, and an ever-evolving cockroach suit with a mind of its own. **104 pages \$10**

BB-033 “**Meat Puppet Cabaret**” **Steve Beard** - At last! The secret connection between Jack the Ripper and Princess Diana’s death revealed! **240 pages \$16 / \$30**

BB-034 “**The Greatest Fucking Moment in Sports**” **Kevin L. Donihe** - In the tradition of the surreal anti-sitcom *Get A Life* comes a tale of triumph and agape love from the master of comedic bizarro.

**108 pages \$10**

BB-035 “**The Troublesome Amputee**” **John Edward Lawson** - Disturbing verse from a man who truly believes nothing is sacred and intends to prove it. **104 pages \$9**



BB-036 “**Deity**” **Vic Mudd** - God (who doesn’t like to be called “God”) comes down to a typical, suburban, Ohio family for a little vacation—but it doesn’t turn out to be as relaxing as He had hoped it would be... **168 pages \$12**

BB-037 “**The Haunted Vagina**” **Carlton Mellick III** - It’s difficult to love a woman whose vagina is a gateway to the world of the dead. **132 pages \$10**

BB-038 “**Tales from the Vinegar Wasteland**” **Ray Fractalossy** - Witness: a man is slowly losing his face, a neighbor who periodically screams out for no apparent reason, and a house with a room that doesn’t actually exist. **240 pages \$14**

BB-039 “**Suicide Girls in the Afterlife**” **Gina Ranalli** - After Pogue commits suicide, she unexpectedly finds herself an unwilling “guest” at a hotel in the Afterlife, where she meets a group of bizarre characters, including a goth Satan, a hippie Jesus, and an alien-human hybrid. **100 pages \$9**

BB-040 “**And Your Point Is?**” **Steve Aylett** - In this follow-up to *LINT* multiple authors provide critical commentary and essays about Jeff Lint’s mind-bending literature. **104 pages \$11**



BB-041 **“Not Quite One of the Boys” Vincent Sakowski** - While drug-dealer Maxi drinks with Dante in purgatory, God and Satan play a little tri-level chess and do a little bargaining over his business partner, Vinnie, who is still left on earth. **220 pages \$14**

BB-042 **“Teeth and Tongue Landscape” Carlton Mellick III** - On a planet made out of meat, a socially-obsessive monophobic man tries to find his place amongst the strange creatures and communities that he comes across. **110 pages \$10**

BB-043 **“War Slut” Carlton Mellick III** - Part “1984,” part “Waiting for Godot,” and part action horror video game adaptation of John Carpenter’s “The Thing.” **116 pages \$10**

BB-044 **“All Encompassing Trip” Nicole Del Sesto** - In a world where coffee is no longer available, the only television shows are reality TV re-runs, and the animals are talking back, Nikki, Amber and a singing Coyote in a do-rag are out to restore the light **308 pages \$15**

BB-045 **“Dr. Identity” D. Harlan Wilson** - Follow the Dystopian Duo on a killing spree of epic proportions through the irreal postcapitalist city of Bliptown where time ticks sideways, artificial Bug-Eyed Monsters punish citizens for consumer-capitalist lethargy, and ultraviolence is as essential as a daily multivitamin. **208 pages \$15**



BB-046 **“The Million-Year Centipede” Eckhard Gerdes** - Wakelin, frontman for ‘The Hinge,’ wrote a poem so prophetic that to ignore it dooms a person to drown in blood. **130 pages \$12**

BB-047 **“Sausage Santa” Carlton Mellick III** - A bizarro Christmas tale featuring Santa as a pirate mutant with a body made of sausages. **124 pages \$10**

BB-048 **“Misadventures in a Thumbnail Universe” Vincent Sakowski** - Dive deep into the surreal and satirical realms of neo-classical Blender Fiction, filled with television shoes and flesh-filled skies. **120 pages \$10**

BB-049 **“Vacation” Jeremy C. Shipp** - Blueblood Bernard Johnson leaved his boring life behind to go on The Vacation, a year-long corporate sponsored odyssey. But instead of seeing the world, Bernard is captured by terrorists, becomes a key figure in secret drug wars, and, worse, doesn’t once miss his secure American Dream. **160 pages \$14**

BB-051 **“13 Thorns” Gina Ranalli** - Thirteen tales of twisted, bizarro horror. **240 pages \$13**



BB-050 “**Discouraging at Best**” **John Edward Lawson** - A collection where the absurdity of the mundane expands exponentially creating a tidal wave that sweeps reason away. For those who enjoy satire, bizarro, or a good old-fashioned slap to the senses. **208 pages \$15**

BB-052 “**Better Ways of Being Dead**” **Christian TeBordo** - In this class, the students have to keep one palm down on the table at all times, and listen to lectures about a panda who speaks Chinese. **216 pages \$14**

BB-053 “**Ballad of a Slow Poisoner**” **Andrew Goldfarb** Millford Mutterwurst sat down on a Tuesday to take his afternoon tea, and made the unpleasant discovery that his elbows were becoming flatter. **128 pages \$10**

BB-054 “**Wall of Kiss**” **Gina Ranalli** - A woman... A wall... Sometimes love blooms in the strangest of places. **108 pages \$9**

BB-055 “**HELP! A Bear is Eating Me**” **Mykle Hansen** - The bizarro, heartwarming, magical tale of poor planning, hubris and severe blood loss...

**150 pages \$11**



BB-056 “**Piecemeal June**” **Jordan Krall** - A man falls in love with a living sex doll, but with love comes danger when her creator comes after her with crab-squid assassins. **90 pages \$9**

BB-057 “**Laredo**” **Tony Rauch** - Dreamlike, surreal stories by Tony Rauch. **180 pages \$12**

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BB-059 “**Adolf in Wonderland**” **Carlton Mellick III** - A dreamlike adventure that takes a young descendant of Adolf Hitler’s design and sends him down the rabbit hole into a world of imperfection and disorder. **180 pages \$11**

BB-060 “**Super Cell Anemia**” **Duncan B. Barlow** - “Unrelentingly bizarre and mysterious, unsettling in all the right ways...” - Brian Evenson. **180 pages \$12**



BB-061 **“Ultra Fuckers” Carlton Mellick III** - Absurdist suburban horror about a couple who enter an upper middle class gated community but can’t find their way out. **108 pages \$9**

BB-062 **“House of Houses” Kevin L. Donihe** - An odd man wants to marry his house. Unfortunately, all of the houses in the world collapse at the same time in the Great House Holocaust. Now he must travel to House Heaven to find his departed fiancée. **172 pages \$11**

BB-063 **“Necro Sex Machine” Andre Duza** - The Dead Bitch returns in this follow-up to the bizarro zombie epic Dead Bitch Army. **400 pages \$16**

BB-064 **“Squid Pulp Blues” Jordan Krall** - In these three bizarro-noir novellas, the reader is thrown into a world of murderers, drugs made from squid parts, deformed gun-toting veterans, and a mischievous apocalyptic donkey. **204 pages \$12**

BB-065 **“Jack and Mr. Grin” Andersen Prunty** - “When Mr. Grin calls you can hear a smile in his voice. Not a warm and friendly smile, but the kind that seizes your spine in fear. You don’t need to pay your phone bill to hear it. That smile is in every line of Prunty’s prose.” - Tom Bradley. **208 pages \$12**



BB-066 **“Cybernetrix” Carlton Mellick III** - What would you do if your normal everyday world was slowly mutating into the video game world from Tron? **212 pages \$12**

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